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**ASSESSMENT OF NORWEGIAN PEOPLE'S AID
TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE TO CMAC**

1996 – 2003

Assessment Mission commissioned by

NORWEGIAN PEOPLE'S AID SOUTH-EAST ASIA REGIONAL OFFICE

PHNOM PENH

FINAL ASSESSMENT REPORT

**AYRINE UK
PASCAL SIMON**

March 2004

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This report presents the opinions of its authors and does not necessarily represent the official position of Norwegian People's Aid.

2. LIST OF ACCRONYMS

AT	Assessment Team
CBMRR	Community Based Mine Risk Reduction
CLC	Coopers & Lybrand Consulting ANS
CMAA	Cambodian Mine Action Authority
CMAC	Cambodian Mine Action Center
CMAS	Cambodian Mine Action Standards
CMMT	Community Mine Marking Team
CMVIS	Cambodian Mine/UXO Victim Information System
CTA	Chief Technical Advisor
DDG	Deputy Director-General, CMAC
DG	Director General, CMAC
DU	Demining Unit
EOD	Explosive Ordnance Disposal
GC	Governing Council (of CMAC)
HIB	Handicap International Belgium
HQ	Headquarters
IMAS	International Mine Action Standards
IMSMA	Information Management System for Mine Action
IWP	Integrated Work Plan
ISO	International Organization for Standardization
JMAS	Japan Mine Action Service
L1S	Level 1 Survey
LUPU	Land Use Planning Unit
LUMU	Land Use Management Unit
MFA	Ministry of Foreign Affairs
MCTU	Mine Clearance Training Unit
MRT	Mine Risk Reduction Team
MDD	Mine Detection Dog
NGO	Non Governmental Organization
NORAD	Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation
NPA	Norwegian People's Aid
PC	Programme Coordinator
PPE	Personal Protective Equipment
PRDC	Provincial Rural Development Committee
QM	Quality Management
RGC	Royal Government of Cambodia
RR	Resident Representative
SOP	Standard Operating Procedures
SNO	Senior National Officer
STA	Senior Technical Advisor
SWOT	Strength, Weakness, Opportunities, Threats
TA	Technical Advisor
TC	Training Centre
TIA	Task Impact Assessment
TOR	Terms of Reference
TS	Technical Survey
UNDP	United Nations Development Fund
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNICEF	United Nations Children Fund
UNTAC	United Nations Transitional Authority in Cambodia
UXO	Unexploded Ordnance

3. PREFACE

3.1. Acknowledgements

The “Assessment of Norwegian’s People Aid (NPA) Technical Assistance to the Cambodian Mine Action Center (CMAC) 1996 - 2003” has been commissioned by NPA South East Asia Regional Office and conducted by a team of three persons : Ms Kit Tola, Assessment Team (AT) Assistant and two Assessment Team Members, Ms Ayrine Uk and M. Pascal Simon¹.

The assessment mission lasted 24 days and was conducted in Cambodia between 15/12/03 and 3/2/04².

The AT takes the opportunity to thank all of those who supported the realization of this assessment by meeting the AT, sharing opinions and experiences and assisting the AT in its task, especially the NPA office in Phnom Penh, CMAC management and CMAC staff who has been visited in the headquarter and in the provinces.

3.2. Limitations

The assessment covers a long period of 8 years (from 1996 to 2003); it has been sometimes difficult to gather relevant documents, to meet people who had knowledge about what had happened so many years ago or who had worked with NPA Technical Advisors (TA) during the target period of the evaluation. In addition, the “CMAC crisis” of 1999 and 2000 provoked the departure of many CMAC employees and the appointment of a lot of new staff who do not have necessarily the historic perspective.

One of the main concerns of the AT during this mission has been to collect and organize the available information in order to reconstruct as much as possible the history of the NPA technical assistance to CMAC and to understand the broad outlines of its evolution. Despite efforts to dig with the passion of archeologists into CMAC and NPA archives, it is likely that some documents from the “early years” are missing.

3.3. Structure of the report

At the end of the evaluation mission, debriefing meetings took place with NPA and CMAC; the debriefing document used during those meetings. The AT presented NPA and CMAC with a draft version of the assessment report and invited the two organizations to offer feedback and comments. The AT took note of those comments and tried to integrate them as much as possible into this final assessment report.

The report is developed following the structure of the assessment mission ToR.

The paragraph 6 is dedicated to the analysis of the achievements and outputs of each of the NPA TA who has been employed during the target period. Existing documents, reports, appraisal forms, exchanges of mails have been reviewed and analyzed by the AT.

The paragraph 7 goes through an examination of relevant documents and reports related to the provision of technical assistance to CMAC for the target period. That section reviews the main

¹ See Annex A 1 : Terms of Reference (ToR) of the Assessment Mission.

² See Annex A 2 : Schedule of the Assessment Mission.

recommendations or conclusions of those essential documents and analyzes the NPA strategy in regard to those recommendations.

The paragraph 8 examines the main constraints and opportunities during the target period of the evaluation, particularly the CMAC crisis of 1999 and 2000.

The paragraph 9 tries to provide a documented and balanced impression about the evolution, relevance and effectiveness of the capacity building exercise of NPA within CMAC.

The paragraph 10 presents what seems to be the most important future needs of CMAC in terms of capacity building and makes suggestions about the role NPA can play in this regard.

The final paragraph 11 presents the conclusions and the recommendations of the AT. The recommendations are first materializing in the body of the report when they are the logical consequence of the analysis. All recommendations are presented again together in the recommendations section of the last chapter of the report.

4. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

NPA is involved in mine action in Cambodia since 1992. In collaboration with UNTAC and UNHCR, the organization started to operate clearance activities in the province of Bantey Meanchey to facilitate repatriation operations. In 1994, NPA program has been integrated into CMAC. However, NPA continued to provide technical assistance to CMAC in positioning TAs within DU 1 and DU 2. An evaluation on this first phase of the program has been done by CLC at the end of 1995. The evaluation report has been published in February 1996.

The present assessment mission covers the period from 1996 to 2003 and has to provide an individual appreciation of each of the NPA TAs as well as an overall assessment of NPA technical assistance impact within CMAC. The objective is also to make recommendations on TAs management and compile as much as possible available documentation for the target period.

The Assessment Team (AT) gathered most of the documents from NPA Phnom Penh Office and NPA Oslo; only few documents could be collected at CMAC as the archives of the organization were not maintained properly. UNDP has also been approached, did not allow the AT to search into its archives and did not recover anything significant.

The AT met relevant persons within NPA, CMAC HQ, CMAC DU as well as former CMAC staff who had left the organization but used to work with NPA TAs. Other organizations supporting CMAC had been visited as well as the Norwegian Embassy in Bangkok. The UNDP PC in Laos has been contacted to have an historical insight about the CMAC crisis period.

Based on collected documents and evidences, the report tries to present a commented and documented assessment of the impact and achievements of the NPA TAs for the target period. It is recognized there are limitations in this evaluation exercise : as it is supposed to cover a long period, many documents are missing and many witnesses related to the early years of the assessment period could not be contacted.

The report develops a section for each TA according to its operational location : in the DU or in the HQ. For the TA working in CMAC HQ, the sections are presented according to the departments where they operated : mine awareness, public relations, quality assurance, planning and operations. The Technical Survey TAs are assimilated to the HQ.

The AT believes that a TA should have the following four qualities and NPA TAs have been assessed accordingly :

- Appropriate skills, knowledge and experience,
- Appropriate behavior and attitude,
- Appropriate sensitiveness to local culture,
- Capacity to transfer skills and knowledge.

Based on the analysis of those required qualities, the AT considers that the NPA TAs had globally a satisfactory profile for the job they had to perform. In most cases, it was recognized by the respondents that NPA TAs had generally the required competences and the right attitude. This was often explained by the fact that they used to stay in their position for longer period than other TAs who sometimes rotated every six months.

Some of the NPA TAs recruitments are however more questionable as some of them evidently did not have the required qualifications and/or did not show the correct behavior and attitude during the implementation of their mission.

The diagram below presents the list of the NPA TAs who operated during the target period of this evaluation.

Due to the specific nature of the TS, the functions of the 3 NPA TAs who operated in this project could not really fit into this diagram; the relevant information is presented into the body of the report.

Assessment of NPA Technical Assistance to CMAC 1996 - 2003				
LIST OF NPA TAs FOR THE TARGET PERIOD OF THE EVALUATION				
	TECHNICAL ADVISOR	POSITION	CONTRACT DATES	TYPE OF CONTRACT
TA in DU	TA 1	TA DU2 Battambang	15/8/95 - 15/8/96, 16/8/96 - 31/12/96, 1/1/97 - 30/6/97	International
	TA 2	Support Service TA in DU2 Battambang	3/3/96 - 31/12/96, 1/1/97 - 30/6/97, 1/7/97 - 30/6/98	International
	TA 3	STA DU1 Sisophon	July 1996 - 30/6/97	International
	TA 4	STA DU3 (Kampot/Pailin) and DU1 Sisophon	28/11/97 - 27/11/98, 28/11/98 - 27/11/99, 28/11/99 - 27/11/00	International
TA in HQ	TA 5	TA Mine Awareness	1/1/96 - 12/07/96, 13/7/96 - 12/7/97, 13/7/97 - 12/7/98, 13/7/98 - 12/7/99	International
	TA 6	TA Public Relations	24/3/97 - 23/3/98, 24/3/98 - 31/12/98, 1/1/99 - 31/12/99	Local
	TA 7	TA Quality Assurance	1/1/97 - 30/6/97, 1/7/97 - 30/6/98, 1/7/98 - 30/6/99, 1/7/99 - 31/12/99	International
	TA 8	TA Quality Assurance	1/1100 - 31/10/01 (Resigned on 1/7/01)	International
	TA 9	TA Planning	16/11/98 - 15/11/99, 16/11/99 - 15/11/2000 (Resigned on 13/10/2000)	Local
	TA 10	CTA Planning and Operations	1/9/2000 - 31/8/2001, 1/9/2001 - 31/8/2002	International
	TA 11	CTA Operations, Audit Specialist, TA Planning and Operations	Oct 2000 - Oct 2001, Oct 2001 - Oct 2002, Oct 2002 - April 2004	International

Naturally, the so-called “CMAC crisis” in 1999 and 2000 seriously disrupted the capacity building exercise as the organization went through grave turbulences. Nearly 2,000 staff had been laid off and a large number of TAs left CMAC. NPA TAs were deeply involved in the emergency reorganization and the reform process of the organization.

If the crisis undoubtedly constituted a hardship for all involved stakeholders, it can also be assumed that it has somehow been beneficial, as it constituted an electroshock for the RGC, CMAC and the donors. The crisis prompted the RGC to get more involved into CMAC and to reorganize the institutional framework of the mine action sector by creating the CMAA and reviewing CMAC mandate, allowing to organization to concentrate on its core functions. The crisis facilitated the understanding that the ongoing technical assistance system had reached its limits and had to be seriously reexamined. The principle of national execution was reemphasized and CMAC ownership of its technical assistance reestablished.

From a general perspective, during the target period of this assessment, it can be considered that NPA impact and achievement has generally been positive. The AT believes that NPA has been responsive to the needs of CMAC and flexible enough to adapt to the evolution of those needs.

The organization followed the general pattern of the evolution of the capacity building strategy within CMAC :

- A progressive shift from TAs with a military background to TAs with a development and civilian experience,
- A shift from a support to technical activities at the DU level to supporting management capacity at the HQ Level,
- A general reduction of the number of TAs to encourage Cambodian ownership.

Such a general trend and evolution in the NPA orientations corresponds to the broad conclusions and recommendations of the main evaluations and review missions related to technical assistance for the target period : the 1996 CLC Evaluation Report, the 1999 Capacity Development Review Mission and the 2001 Terminal Evaluation Mission of the UNDP Phase III Project.

The AT also noticed that NPA, to some extent, had also been innovative in supporting new approaches to increase the productivity and the efficiency of the organization. Successful NPA involvement and support to mine awareness has been pointed out since the creation of this department. NPA has been involved in the development of the risk reduction concept by supporting the CBMRR project and has been instrumental in developing the technical survey model. The organization has been again innovative in supporting the setting up of a quality management system (ISO 9000).

Individuals interviewed in the frame of the present assessment underlined the following positive aspects of the technical assistance provided by NPA :

- Civilian, non-profit organization with no political agenda,
- Generally well recruited TAs who are positioned for a long period,
- Good quality of communication with CMAC and strong solidarity with the organization,

The AT wishes to underline the constructive involvement of NPA into community development projects and, particularly, into land issues and the support to the Land Use Planning Unit process. The capacity to mainstream and integrate mine action and development in Cambodia has to be seen as the added value of the organization.

Despite this generally positive impression, the AT has also identified several issues of concern :

- The absence of a document developing the NPA policy, strategy and vision in mine action in Cambodia is a shortcoming for the organization; the need to develop such a vision had already been identified by the CLC evaluation in 1996. The strong integration of the NPA technical assistance scheme within the UNDP TA plans does not allow justifying such a gap.
At the international level, the NPA mine action strategy is insufficiently developed to provide correct guidance to field operations; the partition between the mine action thematic and the development thematic in the overall international development policy of the organization is at the very least surprising.
- Some of the recruitments have obviously been quite hazardous, with some TAs lacking the necessary expertise or displaying a wrong attitude.
- The monitoring of the TAs by NPA has been generally weak for the target period and was left to the UNDP Program Coordinator who was visibly in the incapacity to coordinate, monitor and evaluate effectively more than 70 international TAs working all around the country.

There was also a lack of external monitoring as, from 1992 to 2003, before the current assessment mission was decided, NPA did only commission one single external evaluation of its technical assistance program in 1995.

- Reporting, especially end of mission reports, are in general considered as poor and useless in term of capitalization of the overall impact and achievement of the organization within CMAC.

Fortunately, since 2001 the AT noticed significant improvements in the documentation, monitoring and reporting of the technical assistance.

The assessment mission concludes that CMAC is still in need of capacity building and technical assistance; firstly because its overall management still calls for reinforcement, but also because the organization is engaged into a positive and permanent move to improve the impact of its operations by developing new approaches such as for example the risk reduction concept. The pilots of those new approaches are often supported through projects funded by donor organizations that should be encouraged to continue the assistance further and assist CMAC to transform those pilots into long-term programs.

Due to the fairly good work done by NPA within CMAC, and due to the added value of the organization in the mine action sector in Cambodia - the capacity to push for an increased integration of mine action and development -, the AT encourages NPA to keep involved in supporting CMAC in the future.

As one of the most mine affected countries in the world, Cambodia still deserves rightly the continuation of such assistance.

The AT also developed the following recommendations for NPA and CMAC :

- CMAC should improve and organize further formal mechanisms to coordinate donors providing technical assistance,
- CMAC should keep a low profile about the ISO certification of the Operations and Planning Department and work hard to retain the certification,
- The NPA DU1 Monitor should be able to report directly to CMAC management,
- CMAC monitoring system should be contracted to an external and independent body to be efficient,
- NPA should develop a general mine action strategy integrating mine action and development; in Cambodia, a mine action policy paper should be drafted,
- CMAC ownership of technical assistance has to be maintained and confirmed,
- CMAC should improve coordination of its TAs, particularly by ensuring the organization of the essential monthly TA meetings,
- General management of TAs has to be strengthened : the importance of recruitment procedures, preparation of ToR, monitoring, appraisal and reporting is to be reaffirmed,
- If requested by CMAC, NPA should positively consider providing a TA who will assist in integrating and reorganizing the CMAC projects and tools related to risk reduction,
- An extension of 6 months for the NPA TA supporting the TS process and the database should be considered.

5. BACKGROUND

5.1. Historical background

5.1.1. Brief overview of the socio-political situation in Cambodia

The assessment mission covers the period between 1996 and 2003. During these years, the main events that had an impact on the evolution of the political and social situation of the country are the following³ :

- July 1997, factional fighting leading to the departure of the First Prime Minister, followed by months of political and social unrest,
- July 1998, national elections followed by months of contestation and social instability,
- November 1998, the new National Assembly convenes in Siem Reap; creation of the new coalition Government with M. Hun Sen as sole Prime Minister,
- 1999, first allegations of mismanagement in CMAC surface,
- August 1999, CMAC Director General is removed and replaced by a new Director General,
- September 2000, creation of the Cambodian Mine Action and Victim Assistance Authority (CMAA),
- October 2000, due to the dramatic reduction of CMAC financial resources, the organization is forced to lay off nearly 2000 staff,
- November 2000, National Symposium on Mine Action; most donors promise to resume support after the Royal Government of Cambodia (RGC) has presented the institutional reform plans,
- In 2001, CMAC reform is ongoing, donor confidence returns as well as financial support,
- February 2002, communal elections,
- July 2003, national elections.

5.1.2. History of NPA Involvement in Mine Action

NPA involvement in Cambodia started during the United Nations Transitional Authority in Cambodia (UNTAC) peacekeeping mission in 1992-93.

One of the biggest obstacles to the repatriation of some 350,000 refugees from the Thai-Cambodian border areas was the vast amount of land mines that littered the countryside and prevented returnees from resettling in Cambodia and making a living as farmers.

In agreement with the United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) and with funding from the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA), NPA began its first mine clearance operation in Banteay Meanchey province, in the Northwest of Cambodia. The project was later extended to include Battambang province. In 1994, NPA passed over control of this demining operation to the national mine action operator, the Cambodian Mine Action Center (CMAC). NPA however continued to support CMAC by providing technical assistance and training in areas such as Quality Control, Planning, Demining Unit Management, Mines Awareness, Public Relations and Operations.

This first phase of NPA assistance to clearance operations in Cambodia has been sanctioned by an evaluation made by Coopers & Lybrand Consulting (CLC) at the end of 1995.⁴

³ See Annex A 3 : Events chronology.

⁴ Coopers & Lybrand, *Evaluation of NPA's Mine Clearance Project in Cambodia*, Draft Report, 26/2/1996.

Understanding that clearance operations remain useless if not closely connected to development activities, NPA launched the “Resettlement, Community Integration and Rehabilitation” project in 1996. The aims of this project were to improve the use of cleared lands and support the resettlement of 5,000 families displaced by the conflict in Bantey Meanchey province.

5.2. ToR of the present assessment.

The present assessment mission has been commissioned by NPA Cambodia. The assessment only covers activities funded by NORAD grants for the period 1996 - 2003.

The AT has to :

- assess the impact of each of the NPA technical advisors for the reporting period,
- evaluate the impact and effectiveness of the technical assistance provided by NPA to CMAC for the target period,
- advise on the best mechanisms to monitor technical advisors,
- make recommendations about the needs in technical assistance to be provided to CMAC and the role that NPA can play in this regards,
- collect and compile the relevant documentation related to the NPA assistance to CMAC

5.3. Assessment methodology

The AT started its mission by collecting available documentation at NPA headquarters (HQ) in Phnom Penh. Requests for additional documents were also sent to NPA office in Oslo. The AT tried to collect documents in CMAC, but without much success, as the archives of the organization have not been maintained properly. For each TA, the AT tried to collect – if available – the ToR, the resume, contracts dates, reports, especially the end of mission report, and appraisals. NPA Cambodia quarterly and annual reports were also collected and reviewed for the target period. Documents produced by NPA TA were also reviewed when relevant.

The AT requested to have access to United Nations Development Program (UNDP) archives in Phnom Penh to look for the technical advisors evaluations made by the UNDP Program Coordinator (PC). Unfortunately, UNDP archives did not reveal much more than the CMAC ones⁵.

The AT organized interviews with CMAC management and all CMAC staff who had been working as former or current counterparts of NPA technical advisors. Semi-directed interviews were hold in CMAC headquarter in Phnom Penh as well as in the Demining Units (DU) of Battambang, Bantey Meanchey, Kompong Thom and at the Training Center (TC) in Kompong Chnang. The AT visited other organizations supporting CMAC as Handicap International Belgium (HIB), UNDP and Japan Mine Action Service (JMAS). The AT met with former CMAC staff who have been working with NPA TAs but had since left the organization.

The AT visited the Royal Norwegian Embassy in Bangkok to get the official staff opinion and perception on the effectiveness and the quality of the NPA technical assistance to CMAC.

NPA staff in Phnom Penh and Sisophon has been interviewed as well as the NPA Program Manager from Oslo who visited South-East Asia during the evaluation period.

⁵ Actually UNOPS has been in charge of the implementation of what the UN called the “CMAC project” for a long period and archives may have been transferred to UNOPS Kuala Lumpur. The AT could not search the UNDP archives in Phnom Penh as they are not accessible to the public; the search has been conducted by UNDP staff.

The AT reviewed the main evaluation documents and studies related to the provision of technical assistance to CMAC during the target period : the CLC report dated February 1996, the report of the 1999 Capacity Development Review Mission⁶ and the evaluation report of the UNDP Phase III project⁷, as well as various NPA and CMAC reports.

⁶ Carolyn Taylor, David Gowdey, *1999 Capacity Development Review Mission of the Cambodian Mine Action Center (CMB/98/006)*, March 1999.

⁷ Bou Puthy, Ayrine Uk, David Edwards, Michael Dalton, *Final Report, Assistance to Demining Programmes Phase III (CMB/98-006), Terminal Evaluation Mission*, February – May 2001.

6. INDIVIDUAL ASSESSMENT OF NPA TAs

According to the AT, TAs should have the following qualities:

- Appropriate skills, knowledge and experience in line with the objectives of the offered position,
- Appropriate behavior and attitude with the national staff and counterparts,
- Appropriate sensitiveness to local culture,
- Capacity to transfer skills and knowledge, this also includes the capacity to gain the counterparts confidence.

Other expected TA qualities have been mentioned as well by some respondents interviewed by the AT: capacity to develop a vision, having good writing skills, having good English language capacity. Some respondents also indicated that the commitment to the organization that the TAs are supporting is essential.

It should be recognized that being a technical advisor is certainly a difficult job that requires a lot of personal and professional qualities. One of its most interesting aspects is obviously the cultural interaction between international TAs and national colleagues; in case of uneasy relationship, it may also become the most challenging one.

Some matters are out of the control of the TA : even the best TA will not deliver if s/he does not have suitable counterparts. Those issues relate directly to recruiting the right people and appointing them to the right position; it implies that the organization enjoys a proper and sound human resources management system.

This AT will never insist enough on the necessity to strengthen CMAC human resources management in order to instill a culture of excellence in the organization, to inspire motivation and pride within the staff and ensure that the organization is able to keep its best elements and attract new ones.

The evaluation of CMAC human resources management system is out of the mandate of this study; it is however obvious that the best technical assistance will remain inefficient in the absence of national staff capable of absorbing it.

The following sections present the information collected by the AT on each of the NPA TAs and is presented according to the various positions of those TAs : in demining units and in the various departments of the HQ.

For each TA, the AT summarizes the profile of the TA, its position and contract duration, its major achievements and outputs and, as far as possible, based on collected documents and evidences, provides relevant comments.

An list of the NPA TAs for the target period is presented in with the position of each of them and contract dates.

6.1. TAs in CMAC Demining Units

▪ TA 1

TA1 started to work with CMAC in 1993 during the first phase of the UNDP technical assistance project as mine team supervisor. He has a military background and was working under an NPA international contract.

Previous NPA contracts :

- 06/06/93-06/12/93,
- 01/01/94 - 01/07/94,
- 02/07/94 - 31/12/94,
- 01/01/95 -14/08/95.

He became Support Service TA at the DU 2 in 1996. For the target period, his successive contracts have been :

- 15/08/95-15/08/96,
- 16/08/96 – 31/12/96,
- 01/01/97- 30/6/1997.

According to information provided by M. Sam Virak⁸, TA1 operated as a TA within the DU2 in Battambang and was more specifically in charge of advising the DU Manager on operational and logistic issues. M. Sam Virak reported that TA1 had “most” of the appropriate skills and qualities to perform his duties and regretted that he did not visit field operations more often.

The performance appraisal done by the UNDP PC in May 1997 indicates that TA1 had a broad range of skills and abilities that are applied effectively. He seemed to have handled his assignment with ease and to have been able to adapt quickly from one type of work to another. He apparently was very culturally sensitive and displayed good leadership ability. He was however advised to follow some kind of formal training in financial management and accounting. The CMAC Officer Personnel made comments on TA1 appraisal and indicated that he had been a competent support service TA who worked very effectively in the Cambodian cultural environment. M. Mam Neang, who had been DU2 Manager in 1997, also confirmed the positive appreciation of TA1 by CMAC staff⁹.

TA1 was not replaced after his departure; CMAC DU staff have requested his extension but his position was transformed into a Public Relations TA position in Phnom Penh.

▪ TA 2

TA2 has a military background. He worked as Support Services TA at the DU 2 in Battambang. He was recruited with a NPA international contract.

TA2 started to work with CMAC in 1994 as Field Operations TA in the DU 1 and 2 and had the following contracts during this period :

- 22/01/94 - 22/07/94,
- 23/07/94 - 31/12/94,
- 01/01/95 - 31/05/95.

He became Support Service TA in 1995 and had subsequently the following contracts :

- 03/03/96 - 31/12/96,
- 01/01/97 - 30/06/97,

⁸ Interview with M. Sam Virak, former DU 2 Manager, and current DU 1 Manager, on 21/1/04.

⁹ Interview of M. Mam Neang, Manager of CMAC Training Center, former DU 2 Manager, on 22/1/04.

- 01/07/97 - 30/06/98.

TA2 functions consisted in training and supporting the DU2 Manager, and other DU personnel, in logistics, finances, administration and medical sections to improve planning and control of expenditures. He was described as a good Support TA and a pleasant person having good relations with the Cambodian staff and being sensitive to the local culture¹⁰.

The performance appraisal done by the former UNDP Program Coordinator on 3/5/97 indicates that TA2 had a very good knowledge of the support functions and unit operations. The appraisal recognizes that he was well motivated and able to adapt to new ideas. The appraisal concludes that he was a quiet but effective leader but that he could benefit from short courses in finance or logistics management.

The CMAC Personnel Officer assessment mentions that TA2 was seen as a capable and effective technical Advisor who was able to work in a quiet and effective way without overshadowing his Cambodian counterparts.

TA2 applied for a contract extension for one more year from July 1998 to June 1999; the extension has been refused by NPA to transform the position into a Planning TA.

In the NPA annual report 1996 and in his End of Mission report, TA2 indicated that, during his mission, he mostly concentrated into budget and finance issues; he provided training in various fields, even in English language. He also mentioned various obstacles in his mission as the numerous changes in the key staff of the DU : during his time in this DU, he reported that 2 deputy DU managers, 4 logistic officers, 3 finance officers and an important number of assistants passed through the DU. He complained about strong divisions into the technical assistance "corps".

In April 1998, TA2 produced a SWOT analysis of the DU2 as an input for the NPA 1997 annual report.

▪ TA 3

TA3 had a military background; he has been working in Cambodia from July 1996 to 30/06/1997 and had a NPA international contract.

He worked as STA at the DU 1 and acted also as Senior National Officer (SNO) among the NPA technical assistance team. According to M. Nou Sarom¹¹, TA3 duty was to support and train the DU 1 Manager in managing CMAC staff and controlling the support services of the DU. He was known for providing good advices, being honest and strict with the staff and respecting the local culture.

A performance appraisal was done by the UNDP PC on 2/5/1997 and indicates that TA3 performed all his functions to a high level. It is said that he held strongly to ideas he knew to be true. He seemed to have dealt with stress very well, to have also strong leadership and excellent management skills. The appraisal reportedly says that TA3 was interested by and understood well the Cambodian culture. Comments and appreciation from CMAC Personnel Officer indicates that he understood well the Cambodian culture. Comments and appreciation from CMAC Personnel Office indicates that TA3 and was a quietly forceful senior TA who set high standards for himself; he was dedicated to his work and highly respected by those he oversaw.

¹⁰ Interview with MM Sam Virak, Mam Neang and M. Cheng Rady, Former Operations Officer at the DU2, current Manager of DU4, on 27/1/04.

¹¹ Interview with M. Nou Sarom, former DU 1 manager, current DU 2 Manager, on 20/1/04.

In the NPA 1996 annual report, TA3 explained that the DU 1 already developed some kind of cooperation the Provincial Department of Rural Development (PDRD) to develop mechanism to ensure a better use of cleared lands. This confirms the strong interest that NPA had always for the land use planning problems. TA3 produced Management, Leadership and Coaching methodologies based on Gestalt Method for training program.

▪ TA 4

TA4 has a non-military background. He had a NPA international contract and he started to work with CMAC in 1997 as Senior Technical Advisor (STA) at the DU 3; he was transferred to the DU1 in March 2000.

Contracts dates :

- 28/11/97 – 27/11/98,
- 28/11/98 – 27/11/99,
- 28/11/99 – 27/11/00.

In his final report, TA4 stated to have been responsible for advising the DU Manager on all aspect related to the management of the DU : “command”, control, operations, administration and finance.

TA4 overseas experience was limited to two missions in Northern Iraq as a UN officer in charge in the security and monitoring system set up by the international community to protect the Kurdish area. He did not have any previous experience in mine action.

According to M. Cheng Rady¹², TA4 went through the crisis of CMAC and has been helpful to raise US funds for the DU 3 in Pailin but he did not really remind what TA4 had been doing daily. M. Rady did not rate very highly the professional achievements of TA4 but acknowledged that he had good relationship with the Cambodian staff and was respectful of the Cambodian culture. M. Rady added that this was true with the three NPA TA he had been working with¹³. He indicated that it was far from being the case with all the TA “contingents” and noticed that NPA TAs generally stayed in their position longer than other TAs, who used to rotate every 6 months, and that it may be a reason explaining the generally right attitude of the NPA TAs.

The performance appraisal done in November 2000 by the NPA Resident Representative (RR) indicates that TA4 did not have experience in the mine action sector neither in technical assistance projects. As the RR observed, that was - indeed - a “*constraint to develop a good strategy for his role as a capacity builder and an advisory*”. Despite this situation, the appraisal continues by saying that the TA had good ability to work in team and had developed good working relationship in the sector. TA4 is described as having a good capacity to adapt to the local culture and did not create any difficulties with his personal code of conduct.

The RR concludes : “*Taking the account his weakness in professional background and experience in the field, the result produced has been satisfactory*”. Following this appraisal, the contract of TA4 has not been renewed.

Documentation found by the AT shows that TA4 contract had not been renewed because CMAC was dissatisfied with TA4 report complaining about nepotism and other problems within CMAC. CMAC obviously did not welcome such report and requested NPA to discontinue TA4 contract¹⁴. Finally, TA4 could finish his contract as initially planned but was moved to DU1. At the end of 2000, his contract was not renewed.

¹² Interview with M. Cheng Rady, former DU 3 Manager and current TC Manager.

¹³ TA4, TA7 and TA2.

¹⁴ See Annex A 15 : Letter from CMAC DG to NPA RR, 20/1/2000.

The AT did not find any formal evaluation of TA4 by CMAC or the UNDP PC.

TA4 final report underlined constant problems faced by CMAC and by the TAs operating in the organization :

- poor professional collaboration with other TAs “contingents”,
- “*deep nepotism*” in the organization,
- he elaborates on the confusing and weird military-style hierarchical structure of the technical assistance (CTA, STA, TA, etc..),
- he identified – as many other observers – the poor human resources management capacity of the organization.

6.2. TA Mine Awareness

▪ TA 5

TA5 has, according to his counterpart, a civilian background. He was employed under a NPA international contract.

TA5 started to work with CMAC as team supervisor :

- 01/09/95 - 01/01/96,
- 01/01/96 – 12/07/96.

He became Mine Awareness TA in July 1996 and had the following contracts :

- 13/7/96 – 12/7/97,
- 13/07/97- 12/07/98,
- 13/07/98 – 12/07/99.

TA5 has been employed as TA to the CMAC Mine/UXO branch created in May 1997 with M. Tang Sunhao as Chief of Branch. He supported CMAC in developing the mine awareness campaign based on the analysis of the accidents pattern and studies of risk taking attitudes. TA5 does not seem to have any experience in mine awareness when starting his mission.

Different activities were eventually developed by the Mine Awareness Branch: a mobile outreach campaign using 12 mine awareness teams, a national mass media campaign, a “key-communicator” campaign targeting specific audiences as NGOs, teachers, local authorities, etc.. TA5 helped CMAC to draft project proposals and elaborate the different curricula, handbooks and Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) of the awareness teams.

TA5 was very much appreciated by his counterpart M. Tang Sunhao¹⁵ who underlined the good cooperation he had with him and assessed positively his communication skills.

A very positive achievement of TA5 capacity building exercise has been the fact that his counterpart became the first Cambodian CMAC Chief of Branch to assume full responsibility for his branch without any assistance from external technical advisor.

The achievements of CMAC mine awareness program was also very much praised by the 1999 Capacity Development Review Mission who identified it as one “*of the most advanced in the world*”.

The performance appraisal done by the UNDP PC in May 1997, concluded that TA5 had achieved high standards in a complex technical field work and had been able to cope with very high demands. He is said to have maintained good professional relationship with international and

¹⁵ Interview with Tang Sunhao, Operations Coordinator, on 13/1/04.

Cambodian staff and – an essential aspect for his job - to have a good understanding of the Cambodian culture. The appraisal mentions that TA5 had achieved “*all his goals*”.

The CMAC Personnel Officer added that TA5 had been a very effective technical advisor who had enhanced the mine awareness function in CMAC to a high level of competence. He is reported to have developed a strong professional relationship with his counterpart. The evaluation highly recommended him for any assignment related to personnel or training development.

In December 1999, CMAC requested NPA to send back TA5 to conduct and organize a wrap up seminar in CMAC mine/UXO branch¹⁶. The objective of the exercise was to develop a national strategic plan for the mine/UXO awareness activities. According to M. Tang Sunhao, such a strategic document has unfortunately never been completed.

6.3. TA Public Relations

▪ TA 6

TA6 has a military educational background with additional university studies. In Cambodia, he has mostly concentrated on research and journalism and has published in the Cambodian press.

He was recruited by NPA under a NPA local contract as TA Public Relations in March 1997. He had the following contracts :

- 24/3/97-23/03/98,
- 24/03/98- 31/12/1998,
- 01/01/99- 31/12/99.

The direct CMAC counterpart of TA6 was the Senior Public Relations Officer¹⁷. In the Public Relations Department, the AT met the new person in charge, M. Prum Sounpraseth¹⁸, who could not provide any information about TA6 as he joined CMAC only recently. The AT also met M. Nhim Sary, Public Relations Officer, who could not provide consistent information.

The performance appraisal done by the UNDP PC on July 1998 concluded that :

“TA6 was a most capable and professional public relations officer with significant skills. He was willing to accept work and new challenges without exception. He was able to adapt to developing circumstances and conditions. He cooperated well with people at all levels and was highly respected by his counterpart. He has also an extremely sound understanding of Khmer culture. He was able to handle intensity of work well. He was a quiet but confident person (who) respected fellows and others. TA6 set high standards for himself and actively seeks opportunities for self-improvement. He didn’t require any specific development to enable him to perform his Public Relations position”.

The comments added by the CMAC Personnel Officer indicate that *“TA6 was sincere and honest (but) was prepared to defend his point of view. His quiet and gentle approach was supported by a confident and capable character, he was well respected (by) those with whom he worked”.*

The evaluation highly recommended keeping him as the Public Relations TA with possible additional appointments related to photography.

The NPA 1998 Annual Report indicates that the Public Information TA spent a lot of his time in *“producing publications”* for CMAC donors or at the occasion of conferences. It was reported that he used to write speeches for CMAC management or reports for the organization. He also helped developing CMAC website. When CMAC crisis arrived, he has been very active in trying to defend

¹⁶ See Annex A 17 : Report from Seminar held in CMAC in January 2000.

¹⁷ The manager of this department changed many times, even during TA6 mission.

¹⁸ On 16/1/04.

the organization and helped CMAC to draft the important “white paper” which presented the way CMAC wanted to reform¹⁹.

The informants met by the AT²⁰ reported that TA6 had indeed excellent writing skills but has not been able to transfer any substantial expertise to CMAC Cambodian staff. To be fair with TA6, it may be understood that the crisis period had been a very harsh time for the public information department supposed to preserve CMAC corporate image in front of the donors, the press and the general public. In addition, it should also be recognized that transferring public relations skills are not necessarily an easy affair, especially when coming to writing skills. It is well known that the level of English knowledge remains generally low in Cambodia and TA6 counterparts were reportedly “short of a minimum standard”

At the end of 1999, CMAC has requested an extension of TA6 contract to NPA. On 5/1/2000, this extension was refused by the NPA RR on the basis that CMAC had requested NPA to support a “CMAC staff position” and not a TA position. The letter to CMAC specifies that that kind of support is “outside NPA mandate”.

6.4. TAs Roving Team Operations/Quality Assurance

▪ TA 7

TA7 has a military background. He has been working in mine clearance for many years in Mozambique, Kosovo and Lebanon. In Cambodia, he was employed under a NPA international contract.

TA7 started to work with CMAC as team supervisor and TA in the DU 1 and 2 in Bantey Meanchey and Battambang.

Previous contracts:

- 12/01/94-12/04/94,
- 05/01/95-05/06/95,
- 06/06/95-31/12/95,
- 01/01/96-01/01/97.

TA7 was appointed as Quality Assurance Technical Advisor in 1997 and was offered the following contracts :

- 01/01/97- 30/06/97,
- 01/07/97-30/06/98,
- 01/07/98-30/06/99,
- 01/07/99-31/12/99.

From 1997, TA7 conducted internal operations audits in the CMAC demining units and different departments as the Training Center²¹. He supported the quality assurance team to analyze how CMAC was operating in order to give recommendations on potential improvements of the security and efficiency of the operations. He developed CMAC quality assurance standards and also provided training on operations and operations safety.

According to the performance appraisal done by the UNDP PC in May 1997, TA7 skills and knowledge were very positively considered. TA7 is said to have developed good working relationship with Cambodian colleagues and to be culturally sensitive.

¹⁹ Interview with HE Khem Sophoan, CMAC DG on 26/1/04.

²⁰ Interviews of HE Sam Sotha, former CMAC DG, 28/1/04, HE Ieng Mouly, Chairman of CMAC Governing council, 28/1/04, M. Heng Rattana, CMAC Deputy Director General (DDG), 15/1/04, and HE Khem Sophoan.

²¹ Interviews with M. Kim Sotha, former QA Operations Manager, on 14/1/04, and with MM. Nou Sarom and Cheng Rady.

In June 1999, a second evaluation was done by the UNDP PC and says that TA7 had acquired a “*good knowledge*” in mine action and “*became extremely competent*”. His dedication and loyalty to the organization was also underlined.

In 1999, in the frame of his responsibilities, TA7 made an investigation on the use of cleared lands in the DU 3 in Kampot. The report²² he made revealed serious mismanagement cases and therefore aroused strong reactions from CMAC management. Several other inquiries have subsequently been commissioned by CMAC but the information reported initially by TA7 was confirmed. TA7 report was allegedly leaked to the press that gave a lot of publicity to it. This new scandal aggravated the CMAC crisis after different audits already discovered important financial irregularities in the organization accounts.

Apparently, TA7 left his position because NPA regulations prevent staff from remaining more than 5 years in the same position and was replaced by TA8.

▪ TA 8

TA8 has a military background. He was hired by NPA to replace TA7 at the position of Quality Assurance TA and had a NPA international contract.

Contract :

- 01/11/00 – 31/10/01 (Resigned on 1/7/01)

According to his resume, TA8 had a long career in mine action with NPA in a large number of different positions. His professional skills are highly considered by the NPA RR and CMAC. However, TA8 counterpart and the quality assurance team unit staff have been laid off few days after the arrival of TA8 and no new counterpart has been recruited by CMAC during the time TA8 has been in Cambodia.

This created of course serious difficulties in trying to achieve his mission objectives. TA8 has therefore tried to develop a “*team based approach*” which allowed him to work closely with most of the Operations and Planning Department staff. He also reported to have reviewed and further developed all the tools and concepts related to quality assurance in CMAC.

In his End of Mission report, TA8 explains that he resigned due to professional and personal reasons and due to a change in his family situation. The report does not elaborate on those reasons but it is understood that the lack of counterpart has apparently played an important role in his decision.

In a letter sent by CMAC to NPA on 2/3/01, CMAC says that *it “will prioritize some key positions as a matter of urgency, those positions will include the counterparts to Technical Advisor Quality Assurance”*²³. However CMAC has been unable to fulfill those 2 positions. In his report, TA8 explains that it may be linked to “*CMAC management lack of commitment to implement quality audit(s)*”. Such a lack of commitment was already underlined in the report TA8 made on the internal quality audit functions of CMAC.

An internal performance appraisal done by the NPA RR on 24/6/01 concluded that TA8 had a very high professional competence and has been a crucial asset for CMAC due his long experience in mine action programs worldwide.

The appraisal report also underlines the difficulties that were due to the ongoing structural changes within CMAC but concluded that, despite those difficulties, TA8 managed to work in a constructive manner.

²² The AT did not see that report.

²³ See Annex A 21 : Letter from M. Heng Rattana to NPA RR, 2/3/01.

The appraisal regretted that no counterpart had been appointed during TA8 mission and indicates that TA8 decided to resign for personal reasons but that NPA should not hesitate to re-hire him in any senior position.

TA8 was replaced by TA11.

▪ TA 11 (1)

TA11 has a civilian background in account, audit and quality management. He started to work in CMAC in 1994 with Handicap International and had consequently several UNDP TA positions in the organization till October 2000. During his contract period with NPA, TA11 had a NPA international contract.

For the target period of this assessment, TA11 had three different assignments with NPA :

- Chief Advisor Operations from October 2000 to October 2001,
- Audit Specialist from October 2001 to October 2002,
- Planning and Operations TA from October 2002 to April 2004.

As this paragraph 6.1.4. concentrates on Quality Assurance technical assistance, this particular section will only consider the period from October 2001 to October 2002 when TA11 acted as Audit Specialist²⁴. The two other periods will be considered in the paragraph 6.5. focusing on the Planning and Operations TAs.

During this 12 months assignment, TA11 trained the CMAC auditor and did several audits with him : the brush cutters, the flail, the DU1 and the mine awareness program. The audits also looked at the cost effectiveness of those tools and it was for example concluded that the flail was not cost efficient while the brush cutters were interesting devices for increasing CMAC productivity.

TA11 also assisted in the development of the field-monitoring SoP; those SoP are reportedly still in use now. He also trained instructors but regretted the weak level of those officers.

Finally, at the inception phase of the technical survey, TA11 supported the organization of a workshop to review the initial concept of this project.

6.5. TAs Planning and/or Operations

▪ TA 9

TA9 has a civilian background with a Master of Arts in Linguistics of Communication in 1978. He has been working in the development sector for many years with different international organizations in Sri Lanka, Afghanistan, Hungary and Somalia. He has also experiences in the private sector.

TA9 has been employed by NPA under a local contract as Planning TA and had the following contracts :

- 16/11/98 – 15/11/1999,
- 16/11/1999 – 15/11/2000.

²⁴ The situation is even a little bit more complex. As the TA Operations position remained vacant, TA11 actually continued to act unofficially as Chief Advisor Operations in addition to his official position of Audit Specialist from October 2001 to October 2002. The performance appraisals of TA11 will be summarized in the paragraph 6.1.5; the overall achievement of TA11 will be more commented in this paragraph.

He resigned on 2/10/2000 and finished his work by mutual agreement with NPA on 13/10/2000.

TA9 reports that he has been involved since the beginning with the establishment of the Planning Department that was just created when he arrived. As already observed with other TAs reports, the report does not provide much information about TA9 achievements, but mentions that he played a general role in supporting the whole Planning Department, *“involving everything from the Mine Detection Dogs project to LUPU development to monitoring mine clearance”*. The report elaborates on the relationship with his counterpart, CMAC headquarter facility and the CMAC crisis.

The NPA “annual” Report 1999/2000 indicates that TA 9 supported the production of an integrated work plan (IWP) to be revised every six months.

The AT could not find any performance appraisal but TA 9 counterparts²⁵ described him as a *“coach”* who liked to brainstorm new ideas. TA 9 also contributed to the development of the Level 1 Survey (L1S) and the operations of the LUPU.

One of the respondents indicated that, concretely, TA 9 did actually have a limited impact on the Department²⁶. In the second year of his assignment, TA 9 appears to be more and more disillusioned with the progress of CMAC reform and seemed to have been so discouraged that he decided to resign. At this time, the UNDP PC even made some negative comments about his professional performances.

He was replaced by TA 10 on September 2000.

▪ TA 10

TA has a long experience in working in developing countries with international organizations in senior management positions. He holds a master in international relations and humanitarian aid. He was employed under a NPA international contract.

TA 10 started to work with CMAC as Chief Technical Advisor Planning on the 1st of September 2000 till the 31st August 2002.

The mission of TA 10 started while CMAC was in the worst financial situation and was forced to lay off nearly 2,000 staff. In addition, his predecessor had resigned without leaving anything concrete behind him and the head of the Planning Department resigned few weeks later.

In such a situation, TA 10 reported to have worked a lot on the restructuring of the organization and the immediate funding needs²⁷.

Major achievements reported by TA 10 include :

- Support to the elaboration of a new IWP format, more streamlined and reader friendly,
- Collect, review and reorganize all the planning and socio-economic tools in order to elaborate a set of procedures describing all the pre and post clearance process²⁸. This document has been reviewed by CMAC and is being currently translated into Khmer. The procedures described in the document will facilitate the precise follow up of the operations and allow analyzing the exact situation of each mine field.

²⁵ Interview with M. Oum Sang Onn, former Director of CMAC Planning Department on 23/1/04; interview with Roath Kanith former Chief of Planning, current JMAS Project Manager, on 23/1/04.

²⁶ Interview with M. Roath Kanith.

²⁷ See paragraph 6.3.7.

²⁸ CMAC Planning Policy and Procedures Manual, Chapter 8.

- The elaboration of an annual management work plan in 2001 and 2002 describing the objectives of CMAC departments and the activities to be implemented. It is not certain if that this tool is still in use now.

TA 10 End of Mission report is more comprehensive than most of the other NPA final reports and provides information about the difficulties encountered during the mission as well as recommendations.

The report indicates that the coordination of the TA by CMAC could be improved and that the organization of TA meetings should be more regular. It is also mentioned that CMAC should improve the cost-benefit analysis to get a better assessment of the socio-economic impact of its operations²⁹. The report laments the poor human resources management³⁰ and the inappropriate organizational structure of the organization.

A long list of recommendations is also provided to the benefit of the Operations and Planning Department but also to CMAC in general.

Final conclusions of the report include two essential issues for CMAC :

- the commitment of CMAC senior management is underlined as well as the need to develop a quality management approach³¹,
- the AT agrees with the conclusion that the reduction of the technical assistance within CMAC has reached a level which is “questionable”. If, in the past, technical assistance has not always been appropriate, satisfactory and beneficial for CMAC, it does not mean that it is not currently the case and that it cannot be in the future. The disappearance of all technical assistance should not be an objective *per se*. Many respondents – Cambodians as foreigners – insisted that CMAC can still take benefit from a strong, well organized and well structured technical assistance.

That is why it is recommended to CMAC to not allow technical assistance to drop too low.

Recommendation No 1 : Donors Coordination.

CMAC should develop a technical assistance plan – based on a functional needs analysis - that will be presented and discussed with its donors in order to inform them about the needs and facilitate the offer for assistance and its complementarity.

Regular meetings (for example twice a year) between donors and CMAC on the issue of technical assistance would harmoniously complement bilateral contacts that CMAC maintains with its donors. Such a meeting would allow all donors to better coordinate their support and to have the same general understanding of the situation and the progresses made by the organization.

²⁹ The AT would like to underline that doing the socio-economic cost-benefit analysis of mine action operations is a real challenge. Some attempts done in the past even concluded mine action does not always impact “positively” - in socio-economic term - the development of a country : basically, with the current technology, mine action may cost more than the socio-economic benefits it will provide. Such results are most of the time induced because of the poverty situation of mine affected countries : if compared with the value of the land or the financial output of rice production, the cost of clearing an hectare of land in Pursat province may indeed appear prohibitive. Situation would be totally different in the center of Phnom Penh where the land has a high value. Those analyses prompted some involved operators, advisors and managers to review somehow the mine action doctrine and to propose a re-focus on more humanitarian concerns. This lead to the elaboration of the “risk reduction” concept. See Annex A 14.

³⁰ Poor human resources management certainly contributes to the lost of key CMAC staff who leave the organization at the first opportunity. Losing its best elements constitutes a serious recurrent problem for CMAC, undermines the efficiency of the technical assistance and gradually weakens the corporate management of the organization. TA10 rightly recommends CMAC to develop a strategy to address this “brain drain”.

³¹ See the achievements of TA 11 on quality management and the recommendation of the AT related to CMAC monitoring system.

Performance appraisals done by NPA RR in December 2000 and May 2001 concluded that TA 10 had a very professional skill with a global overview on his role as advisor. He is said to have willingness to take on challenges and the team building is identified as one his greatest strengths. He also has proven to be flexible and focused in a time of changes in CMAC.

TA 10 is described by all respondents³² to have a well-structured and organized professional approach; all of them declared to have learned a lot in working with him and also to have developed friendly relations. He is also said to have an excellent attitude toward Cambodian colleagues and to be respectful to local culture.

He was replaced by TA 11 when he left CMAC in September 2002 to fulfill the position of NPA Regional RR.

▪ TA 11 (2)

This paragraph will concentrate on two contract periods of TA 11 when he was :

- Chief Advisor Operations from October 2000 to October 2001 and
- Planning and Operations TA from October 2002 to April 2004.

For the first period, from October 2000 to October 2001, when TA 11 was Chief Advisor Operations, the main achievements he reported consist of :

- Arranging the visit in Afghanistan to conduct a benchmarking mission and observe the practices in the Afghan mine action program; as a concrete output of this visit, a field monitoring system has been developed in 2002,
- Convinced CMAC management of the need to provide Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) to all CMAC deminers,
- Improved the reporting system on CMAC operations; procedures and formats to collect the information have been developed and introduced; this allowed to have a clearer picture of CMAC productivity.
- Supported the committee to review and develop the SoP; the effort is still ongoing,
- Setting up of a costs database³³ in order to have an improved and precise knowledge of the costs of each operation; such a database is an essential tool to elaborate budgets, draft projects proposals and manage those projects. The set up of this database has required a lot of efforts but this tool is still in use today.

For the second period, October 2002 to April 2004, TA 11 fulfilled the position of TA Operations and Planning. The modifications of the position ToR had been requested by CMAC in June 2002 and CMAC suggested contracting TA 11 for the new position.

During this period, TA 11 reportedly achieved the following :

- implemented an audit on the use of explosive³⁴,
- developed the concept of quality management according to the ISO 9000 standard.

Most of his work in the year 2003 involved the preparation for the ISO certification of the Operations and Planning Department. The official 9001:2000 certification of this department has finally be obtained by CMAC on 30/1/04.

Achieving the certification has been a long process and may have created some tension between TA11 and some of his counterparts.

³² Interviews with MM. Khem Sophoan, Heng Rattana, TA 13, Prak Sokhon, Oum Sang Onn.

³³ See Annex A 21 : Documents related to TA 11; Presentation of the Costs Database.

³⁴ After the press reported that CMAC explosives could have been smuggled and used in the Bali bombing attack.

In the draft version of his detailed End of Mission Report, TA 11 points out correctly that the use of the ISO 9000 standard is recommended by the International Mine Action Standards (IMAS) and the United Nations³⁵. TA 11 also points that ISO has the advantage of establishing a good management system, focusing on customer satisfaction and ensuring the maintenance of the system through regular independent audits.

There is no doubt about the importance of setting up a quality management system within CMAC. The AT will not elaborate on the validity of the ISO system versus alternative quality management mechanisms. But the AT wishes to reassert the fact that IMAS is only a collection of guidelines and suggestions to be adapted to the situation of affected countries; IMAS is not a normative regulation.

It may also be understood that the “customer approach”, as well as other processes incorporated into ISO, may appear quite unusual in the development sector³⁶ and some reactions had to be expected, including into the NPA team in Cambodia.

However, what appears more essential to the AT is to put into practice a quality management process which will lead to improvements in the department operations and which will ensure the persistence of a certain level of quality in CMAC management, whatever the name of this process. Hopefully ISO may achieve this.

For CMAC, the certification of the Operations and Planning Department should be seen as the beginning of a challenge, not as the end of the path. The department will be subject to independent surveillance audits every 6 months and will of course have to maintain the quality of its management to retain the certification.

Recommendation No 2 : ISO Certification.

CMAC should remain modest when communicating about the ISO certification to donors or to the Government. First, the certification only applies to a department of 23 people and, secondly, if the department loses the certification later on, the potential negative impact will be in proportion with the publicity made at the time of the certification. It is likely better to remain discreet and to work hard to maintain the level of quality.

The performance evaluation done by the NPA RR concluded that TA11 was very skilled in management and had a great knowledge about demining from a global view. The evaluation noted that he had the respect and the understanding with the national CMAC staff, and has build up an extremely good relationship with the personnel. According to the NPA RR, TA 11 was perceived as very structured in his work and his pedagogic skills are reported as “*outstanding*”. He is also said to have a good knowledge of in quality assurance international standards.

There was also a very good appreciation from the UNDP PC in July 1998 who concluded that TA 11 had “*exceeded by far the expectations of his ToR*”.

Cambodian counterparts or colleagues who worked with TA 11 generally reported³⁷ that he has a good character and that they developed friendly relations with him. They generally described his work as very effective.

Interestingly, TA 11 End of Mission Report (draft version) also shares some conclusions similar to the recommendations made by this assessment report. For the future, he recommends for example to better integrate the various CMAC projects related to the risk reduction concept; he also suggests to develop an external and independent monitoring system following the Afghanistan model.

³⁵ Resolution of the General Assembly 51/540 dated 23/11/96.

³⁶ Although some other non-governmental organizations like Cambodia Trust are already certified by ISO; DTW is also said to move into this direction now.

³⁷ Interview with MM. Prak Sokhon, Khem Sophaon, Heng Rattana, TA 13, Keo Vannak, Kim Sotha.

6.6. TAs Technical Survey

An important and positive contribution to CMAC has been the support to the development of a Technical Survey (TS) capacity. This activity started at the end of 2002 and is still going on now; it mainly consisted in the elaboration of a concept for the TS in Cambodia, a test phase in the field and the elaboration of SoP based on this test.

The TS is part of those activities more recently launched by CMAC and which focus on the concept of risk reduction. Other “risk reduction” projects do exist already beside the TS and consist – among others - in Mine Risk Reduction Teams (MRT) and the Community Based Mine Risk Reduction program (CBMRR).

The risk reduction concept has been developed in the mine action sector in response to the increasing dissatisfaction with the existing “100% safety” doctrine that was prevailing and with the less than appropriate deployment techniques that lead to a very low cost-efficiency of mine action³⁸. The evolution of the thinking in the sector has been welcomed by CMAC that wanted to show, after the crisis, its commitment in improving its operations efficiency, rising its productivity and increasing its impact on the affected populations.

Besides providing the necessary technical information that will be used to develop future clearance operations, the TS also greatly improve the existing information on the concrete impact mines and UXO have on the livelihood of the villagers and the level of the risk they have to face. Through the TS process, the risk is more precisely assessed according to the suspected level of contamination of the minefields discovered in the village and the current and/or future use of the land by villagers. The ultimate objective of this process will be the provision of an appropriate response allowing the reduction of the risk faced by affected villagers.

The process is delicate and, in order to reach valuable and constructive conclusions, requires strong analytical qualities by TS team members and it remains to be seen if CMAC will succeed to attract suitable individuals to perform this duty.

In order to operate efficiently, the TS has to interact closely with the CBMRR, which will ensure the follow up once the TS team has left the village, and with various clearance and verification operational teams as the MRRT or the Mine Detection Dogs (MDD). The integration, possible redesign and reorganization of those various tools still remain a challenge for CMAC³⁹.

The NPA contribution allowing the development of the TS pilot phase is considered very positive and is orientating CMAC in the right direction in term of efficiency and productivity.

Three TAs have been used in the development of the TS concept and SoP; they were employed under local contracts.

- **TA 12**

TA 12 has an extensive background in the development sector and in mine action in particular. He was employed for 4 months by NPA from October 2003 to February 2003 to assist in the implementation of the phase 1 of the TS pilot phase.

³⁸ See Annex A 4 : Two discussions papers by MM. Reuben McCarthy and Pascal Simon on the cost-efficiency of mine action and the risk reduction concept.

³⁹ See Recommendations No 9.

TA 12 has been a major actor in the process but has always worked very closely with CMAC counterparts, MM. Srey Sangha and Tong Try⁴⁰. The team conducted a field study at Ou Anlok village (Komrieng district) and developed the concept, the SoP for data collection as well as the village and minefield reports. Area reduction with the active participation of the community was also included in the field trial.

The outputs of TA 12 are impressive in quantity and in quality, in regard to the time he operated in this pilot⁴¹. However, the Cambodian counterpart of TA 12 regretted that he did not take more attention to his opinions⁴². The pilot phase of the TS looked more like a research-action than a traditional capacity building exercise and it is likely that TA 12 was under pressure to produce - in a short period of time - the expected outputs and had probably less attention in building capacity of his counterparts than he would have had in a normal long term TA position.

▪ TA 13

TA 13 was recruited by NPA from December 2002 to May 2003 to provide consultancy service in respect to the phase 2 of the Technical Survey pilot conducted with CMAC.

The objectives of this phase 2 had been to define procedures to physically identify mined areas located in a large minefield reported by local communities. This technique is known as “identification of mined areas”. During his mission, TA 13 developed this technique by conducting breaching lane clearance to have an improved knowledge of the mined area; he also conducted clearance of known mine lines in order to reduce the immediate threat to local population. He also updated the SoP developed by TA 12 and translated them into Khmer.

TA 13 rightly pointed risk factors in the development of this new TS concept :

- o In order to achieve what is expected, the TS team leaders will have to develop a high level of analytical skills and it may not be easy to find suitable individuals with the required qualities and willing to spend most of their time in the field.
- o The TS teams have to be closely connected to the CBMRR but need also to be supported by other CMAC tools to effectively have an impact on the reduction of the risk for the affected communities. The coordination of the TS teams, the CMT, MRT and eventually the MDD will require a lot of effort and thinking at the field level.

TA 13 suggests that DU Operations Officers will be in charge of this task; the AT is however of the opinion that it is unlikely that those officers will be able to develop alone a coordinated and articulated deployment mechanism of all those various tools.

▪ TA 14

TA 14 has been hired under CMAC contract with NPA funding for two periods of 5 and 3 months corresponding to the phase 3 of the TS pilot phase⁴³. On the basis of the Information Management System for Mine Action (IMSMA), TA 14 had to design a TS database adapted to the needs of CMAC. Once the information was recorded at CMAC, it would consequently have been sent to CMAA to be incorporated into the national mine action database.

⁴⁰ Interview with TA 12 on 2/2/04.

⁴¹ See Annex A 22: Documents related to TA 12; TS Concept and TS report formats.

⁴² Interview with M. Srey Sangha on 19/1/04.

⁴³ See Annex A 24 : Work documents related to TA 14; TA 14 ToR.

However, things did not go as planned. Apparently, the proposed flow of information did not suit the CMAA that has so far refused to adopt it. In addition, the IMSMA version that CMAC obtained was a “read only” version and could not be further developed.

In conclusion, TA 14 has been in the obligation of developing a new application from scratch. This application seems to give satisfaction to all users and has even the advantage to be able to be used by all CMAC operational units, and not only the TS. If there was an agreement between all relevant organizations, agencies and operators in Cambodia, it even looks like TA 14 application could be used as a national database⁴⁴.

More recently, in the second phase of his assignment, TA 14 has been more involved in monitoring the implementation of the TS project to identify and analyze non compliance of SoPs and ensure that field reports were properly drafted.

Assistance from TA 14 is much appreciated by CMAC respondents⁴⁵ who described him as very helpful, respectful and constructive.

6.7. Additional contributions to CMAC

Although not directly related to the ToR of this assessment mission, the AT took interest in various other supports provided by NPA to CMAC for the target period.

In October 2000, NPA decided to request a reallocation of the NORAD grant⁴⁶ for an amount of approximately USD 53,000 in order to pay salaries of key staff in CMAC Headquarter. This financial support - arriving while CMAC was out of funds - covered essential key staff salaries for a duration of 4 months from November 2000 to February 2001.

This direct financial assistance to CMAC budget prevented CMAC from losing many competent staff and protected the long time capacity building investment of donor organizations.

When The Netherlands decided to provide funds to CMAC DU1 through NPA, a monitoring system has been set up to control the implementation of the operations in this DU⁴⁷. The objective is to ensure that CMAC complies with the SoP, that the budget is spent according to the project agreement and that the clearance plan follows the planning established through the LUPU system. The main finding of this monitoring exercise is that the compliance with the SoP was quite low but action has been taken with the DU Manager to improve the situation.

Although the AT did not study in detail this particular operation, it looks like the experience is quite positive – although probably arduous for the monitor ! – and could lead to encouraging improvements in the quality of CMAC operations implementation. Actually, the added value of this experiment is certainly the fact that the monitoring is external to CMAC as it is reported to the AT that the internal CMAC monitors⁴⁸ are less efficient than the external NPA monitor. This situation can be explained by the complacency of CMAC staff and the lack of discipline enforcement⁴⁹.

Recommendation No 3 : NPA DU 1 Monitor.

⁴⁴ But the AT does not have particularly in depth competence in database systems.

⁴⁵ Interviews with M. Kim Ly on 19/1/04 and M. Srey Sangha.

⁴⁶ See Annex A 6 : Reallocation of Norad grant – NPA support to CMAC

⁴⁷ Interview with M. Phen Vandy on 29/1/04; See Annex A 15 : NPA Cambodia Organigramme and DU 1 Monitor position in this Organigramme.

⁴⁸ There are 8 CMAC doing monitoring in the DU 1.

⁴⁹ For unfounded reasons, CMAC employees reportedly seem to see themselves as government official staff and therefore consider normal to have a much lower quality outputs than, for example, NGO staff. Such an attitude can have serious consequences, in particular in term of security, not mentioning outputs quality.

The NPA DU 1 monitor should have the opportunity to report directly his findings to CMAC management to make sure that the real situation in the field is accurately known at the top level of the organization.

Recommendation No 4 : Externalization of the monitoring system.

It is the opinion of the AT that an external and independent monitoring system will be much more efficient than an internal one and should lead to spectacular improvements in the discipline enforcement and the respect of regulations and procedures. It is therefore recommended to CMAC to consider contracting an external and independent monitoring body for all its field operations; a pilot phase could be run in a limited number of DU before being gradually enlarged⁵⁰.

⁵⁰ It was reported to the AT that some ideas had already been floated about reinforcing the integration between the CMAC training center and the monitoring functions of the organization. If this is pursued, it could even be more efficient to externalize the training function of CMAC as well. This may lead to a very coherent and interesting project.

7. REVIEW OF NPA STRATEGY AND ITS EVOLUTION

The AT reviewed three essential documents related to the provision of technical assistance to CMAC as well as their conclusions and recommendations, in order to analyze, comment, validate or invalidate the strategy followed by NPA.

7.1. The 1996 CLC Evaluation Report

The CLC evaluation mission took place from December 1995 to March 1996. The evaluation concentrated explicitly on the NPA mine action program from 1993 to 1995. The draft final mission report in possession of the AT is dated February 1996.

Here are the main relevant recommendations related to the provision of technical assistance to CMAC.

- ***The CLC report regretted the absence of mine action strategy for NPA Cambodia.***

Regarding the absence of a NPA strategy for the mine action activities, the situation did not change, as there is still no document describing such a strategy. As stated in a guideline drafted by the NPA RR, probably in 1999, to encourage his colleagues to work on the elaboration of the paper⁵¹ : *“We have made so good efforts since 1995 to hammer out this for NPA vital document, but unfortunately, (th)is has not materialized yet”*. And he continued further : *“Obviously there is a need to formalize and structure the work we are doing at the same time give the direction. If you don’t know where you want to go why then bother about the direction !”*.

The absence of NPA policy for its mine action activities in Cambodia does not mean that, in regard to this evaluation, the NPA technical assistance to CMAC has not been valuable or did not respond to certain criteria. It may simply be considered that NPA has tried to be *“pragmatic”*⁵² in providing support to CMAC and tried to respond to needs and requests expressed by CMAC.

It should be noted that NPA always coordinated closely the provision of its technical assistance with UNDP and particularly with the PC. A letter dated 5/2/2000 from the NPA Resident Representative to CMAC Director General related to the Public Relations Technical Advisor mentions that : *“By agreement with CMAC and UNDP, the UNDP Program Coordinator was the official contact for NPA on matters related to all Technical Advisors. Contract extensions, performance appraisals and terminations have been dealt with in this manner since the inception of the Assistance Program”*. That strong integration of the NPA technical assistance into the UNDP/UNOPS plans may also explain the reason why NPA did not necessarily feel the need to develop a policy paper.

The AT considers that it would however have been worthwhile for the organization to develop its own vision of the support it wanted to provide to CMAC and to the mine action sector in Cambodia, especially in light with the conclusions and the recommendations of the CLC evaluation⁵³.

Attempts to draft such a strategy have been noticed in 1999 and 2000, but those documents apparently did not go further than drafts.

The first document⁵⁴ has the merit to insist on the *“holistic and integrated”* approach that the organization wants to follow in the sector and is centered on the concept of “victim” to define its target.

⁵¹ See Annex A 6 : NPA RR guideline for drafting mine action strategy.

⁵² Interview with Harald Smedsrud, NPA Program Manager.

⁵³ The CLC report states that the absence of strategy did not facilitate the evaluation exercise.

The second paper⁵⁵ is a first attempt to develop a country strategy in Cambodia. Reaffirming the notions included into the first document, it tries, a little bit awkwardly, to develop something as a policy.

More recently, at the international level, NPA has developed another "NPA Mine Action Policy"⁵⁶. The document indicates that NPA has been mainly active in lobbying in favor of the implementation of the Mine Ban Treaty as well as in clearance, survey and awareness activities. For the future, the document states that the "*NPA mine action unit will continue*" to support the "*universalisation of the Landmine Convention*" (in reference to the Mine Ban Treaty), to implement "*methodologies on priority setting and socio-economic aspects related to mine action (TIA⁵⁷)*" and to enhance "*methods to improve humanitarian mine action along the lines of quality, cost efficiency and impact*".

Although not strictly included into the mandate of this study and although the document recognizes that, in the future, NPA mine action activities can be enlarged from "*clearance, survey and awareness*", the AT considers this policy as too short and too vague to give guidance to the various NPA mine action programs in the world.

This NPA policy document is part of a large exercise of refining the NPA strategy, values and working methods at the international level. It is surprising to note that the "Mine Action Program" is one of the two thematic components of the NPA strategy beside the "Development Program"; it would have probably been more appropriate for mine action to be instead integrated into the development program, as advocated by draft strategic documents mentioned above. It is even more unexpected to notice such a separation in a strategic document of an organization that, in Cambodia, has been one of the first to promote the integration of mine action into the larger development sector, launched a "community development" project as a natural continuation of its mine action activities and supported the creation of Land Use Planning Units (LUPU) dealing with the use of cleared lands.

It appears to the AT that being a civilian development organization involved in mine action and capable of combining and mainstreaming mine action and "traditional" development activities is the real NPA added value for the mine action sector in Cambodia. This should be recognized and preserved; lessons learned from Cambodia may be used by the organization at the international level.

Recommendation No 5 : NPA Mine Action Policy.

The NPA mine action unit at the headquarter should engage in consultations with the various resident representatives of the organization to elaborate a general mine action strategy integrated into the larger NPA development plans. When such a strategy will be produced, it will support the development of a policy paper in each country. Such a strategy can remain pragmatic and in line with the needs expressed by national counterpart organizations but it should also emphasize the latest developments and thinking in the sector as well as more innovative concepts as risk reduction or community liaison.

⁵⁴ See Annex A 8 : Strategy for Mine Action 1999-2002 for Norwegian People's Aid; draft document probably developed by NPA Headquarter. Document not dated.

⁵⁵ See Annex A 9 : Humanitarian Mine Action, A Country Strategy, 5 February 2000.

⁵⁶ See Annex A 10 : NPA Mine Action Policy.

⁵⁷ The AT did not review this prioritization tool.

- ***The CLC report recommended shifting military assistance to a more civilian and management oriented assistance.***

Much has already been written on this; such a shift had been recommended by all observers and evaluators⁵⁸ in the mine action sector and was positively implemented by NPA that succeeded in adapting its assistance to the evolution of the needs within CMAC. It had indeed appeared that the technical capacity of CMAC staff operating in the Demining Units (DU) had gradually become more satisfactory and that the challenge, for a large organization like CMAC, did actually reside more in improving weak management capacities. During the latest years of the period considered by this evaluation, it is obvious that NPA was deeply involved in building the management capacity of key persons and departments of the organization.

Such an evolution was not commanded by the fact that military TA did not do their job properly in assisting CMAC. It is likely that most of them certainly did and NPA TAs with a military background have generally been very well appreciated by CMAC.

The shift was rather induced by other factors :

- o certainly the fact that the organization grew dramatically in those years and that managing it became more tricky and required new skills generally not found in the military personnel,
- o more importantly the emergent understanding that mine action was not so much about clearing mines than contributing to poverty alleviation and socio-economic development. Those objectives require competences that are rather different than those available in the military and CMAC had an increasing need for being assisted by development professionals rather than military⁵⁹.

During the period considered by this assessment mission, NPA rightly transformed gradually its technical assistance by reducing the TA with a military background and hiring TA with a more civilian profile and having development experiences.

- ***The CLC report suggested to position TA's at CMAC Headquarter in order to "gain more influence"***

This recommendation may first look weird today : provision of technical assistance should normally respond to purely technical needs of the recipients and should not be conducted to respond to political considerations or to increase the influence of the donor within the beneficiary organization.

However, it should be reminded that, in the early years of CMAC, having an "influence" within the organization might have been a secondary objective for some donors or organizations. As it was well known that there were rivalries between TAs provided by the different donors to orientate the general CMAC policy. This situation exacerbated with the sharp increase of the TAs number and underlined the necessity to reinforce Cambodian ownership of CMAC.

NPA did indeed position several TA at CMAC headquarter after the CLC evaluation, it did not appear to the AT that the prime objective of this move was to gain influence inside the organization but instead to respond to the evolution of the needs. Moreover, NPA capacity to play *solo* was reduced by the strong integration into the UNDP technical assistance plans.

⁵⁸ The 1999 Capacity Development Review Mission reached the same conclusions.

⁵⁹ Such a conclusion is shared by the 1999 Capacity Development Review Mission which stipulates : "Reflecting the antiquated notion that mine action is a military operation, many TAs were recruited from the ranks of active duty and retired military personnel. (...) It is now recognized that the skills required to establish and run a mine action organization have far more to do with program management and development oriented activities than with military expertise." (Page 28).

If the presence of competent TAs in the HQ permitted NPA to have a positive “influence” on the transformation of CMAC from a military type organization into a more civilian and functional body, nobody will really complain about it. If it contributed to upgrade CMAC capacity to plan and manage its operations, then again such an influence should certainly be seen as a positive one⁶⁰.

▪ **CLC suggested to create a Socio-economic branch in CMAC**

Interestingly, back from 1995 when the evaluation took place, the CLC report recommended to CMAC to develop a socio-economic branch and it is certainly not the less interesting recommendation of the document.

It is now more largely understood that the benefit of mine action lies in its – hopefully positive ! - socio-economic impact on the affected populations and that mine action operations do not automatically and miraculously contribute to that objective *per se*. Whatever the kind of impact which is pursued by the operation⁶¹, socio-economic considerations have to prevail in the planning of mine action operations and those considerations will have to be assessed to conclude on their success or failure. The lack of socio-economic branch in CMAC severely hindered the organization planning capacity as well its aptitude to develop clearly its mission and goals⁶².

Unfortunately, the creation of a socio-economic branch in CMAC occurred only in 1998⁶³ and has been followed by the establishment of a Planning Department at end of the same year; NPA judiciously positioned a TA Planning within this newly created Planning Department.

In 1998, CMAC has also been instrumental in the establishment of the Land Use Planning Units (LUPU) in Battambang and Bantey Meanchey⁶⁴. Those mechanisms were set up to ensure efficient clearance planning, based on a bottom-up approach responding to the needs of the beneficiaries. The system, driven by local authorities, is supposed to be participative, decentralized and transparent.

From the moment LUPUs were established, the final responsibility to decide what tasks had to be included into the annual work plans was assigned to provincial development bodies – and primarily the governors – instead of CMAC.

That move has been definitely a positive one for CMAC – as it removed sensitive responsibilities to the organization⁶⁵ – and reinforced the integration of mine action into local development plans⁶⁶. If

⁶⁰ On the most usual biases of technical assistance and about the potentially different expectations from the Government and the donors, see “*Technical Assistance and Capacity Development in Aid-dependent Economy : the Experience of Cambodia*”, CDRI, Working Paper No 15, August 2000.

⁶¹ Clearance can be done for resettling displaced populations, providing housing to landless people, access to resources as water, forest or agricultural lands, for building a school or a health center. Clearance can also be done to reduce the mine/UXO casualties and/or the risk that affected populations have to face.

⁶² On this issue, the 1999 Capacity Development Review Mission already concluded : “*The activities of the Socio-economic branch have highlighted some of the difficulties in prioritization and planning process caused by the rigidly hierarchical enunciation of the priorities stated in the (CMAC) Royal Decree. Few clearance tasks fit cleanly with the four priorities enunciated with CMAC.*” (Page 12).

⁶³ The need had been identified much before but donor support from the EC had to be delayed due to the 1997 factional fighting.

⁶⁴ To be exact, the mechanism was initially slightly different in Bantey Meanchey and was called the Land Use Management Unit (LUMU). The system has been officially standardized in 2002 when a LUPU has been created in this province, leading to the disappearance of the LUMU.

⁶⁵ The 1999 Capacity Development Review Mission noted that Socio-economic staff of CMAC was victim of coercion and intimidation. Some of them even received death threats to approve clearance tasks not suitable for CMAC (Page 12).

the system had been set up before, it might have prevented land use mismanagements as observed in Kampot.

In Cambodia, NPA has been rightly concerned with land use issues and took an active part in the setting up of the LUPU/LUMU mechanism through its community development project in Bantey Meanchey⁶⁷. Such a vital support is still ongoing - and relevant - today.

7.2. The 1999 Capacity Development Review Mission

Regarding the provision of technical assistance to CMAC, the major recommendation of the mission report was **to conduct a phase out withdrawal of TAs**.

The report analyzed numerous weaknesses of the CMAC technical assistance system and considered that it was inappropriate for this system alone to provide the necessary capacity building needed by CMAC for its future development⁶⁸. The report document indicates that the provision of technical assistance to CMAC cost something between USD 7,5 and 13 million a year⁶⁹; the report concluded that the existing CMAC technical assistance structure was inefficient and extremely cost ineffective⁷⁰.

The report recommended a sharp reduction of the number of TAs and a diversification of the mechanisms to provide capacity building at a lower cost through different means as national or international schools, universities or even private companies. It was also suggested to hire consultants on appropriate length contracts to provide an *ad hoc* and shorter assistance when needed.

The report lists 40 technical advisors positions and their phase out plan : 18 positions should have been terminated in 2000 and 19 in 2001. The three remaining technical advisors supposed to stay at least till the end of 2002 were the Program Coordinator, the Roving Support TA and the Finances TA.

It is most likely that the smooth implementation of the report recommendations has been impeded due to the CMAC crisis in 1999 and 2000, but the number of CMAC technical advisors decreased anyway sharply and, at the end of 2003, CMAC had only 12 of them⁷¹, including 2 NPA TA who should finish their mission in March 2004.

7.3. Evaluation of the UNDP Phase III Project

The 2001 Terminal Evaluation Mission (TEM) of the UNDP Phase III Project reviewed all aspects of the evolution of CMAC and the support provided to the organization, including technical assistance.

⁶⁶ For a detailed evaluation of the LUPU system, see the evaluation report of the Handicap International Belgium project “*Support for the planning of demining and the utilization of demined land in Cambodia*”, Michael F. Bolton, Praivan Limpanboon, Chhim Vanak, October 2003.

⁶⁷ The 1999 NPA Evaluation Report of the CD project indicates that “*much of the driving force for LUMU establishment came from NPA, Carere and the Director of the PDRD, with NPA especially involved in the discussions leading to its creation and its contribution of equipment and staff expertise to the unit*”.

⁶⁸ 1999 Capacity Development Review Mission, Page 28.

⁶⁹ In 1999, CMAC had a total of 78 technical advisors (Terminal Evaluation Mission UNDP Phase III Project, Page 53). At the time of the Capacity Development Review Mission, it is indicated that CMAC employed more than 60 technical advisors (Page 28).

⁷⁰ 1999 Capacity Development Review Mission, Page 31.

⁷¹ 4 EOD, 2 NPA MDD, 1 TC, 1 Logistics, 1 MIS, 1 Maintenance and the 2 other NPA TAs (Operations/Planning and Technical Survey/Database).

The most interesting issues of this document directly related to the provision of technical assistance and relevant to the NPA assessment are :

- Once again, the report recommends to limit as much as possible the provision of military TAs,
- The report analyzed in depth the 1999-2000 crisis and its consequences,
- The report indicates that UNDP and CMAC implemented the main recommendation of the 1999 Capacity Development Review Mission : the sharp decrease of the number of TAs. In November 1999, there was still 62 international TAs; by the first half of 2000, they had decreased to 45 and to 20 by March 2001⁷². The report estimated the needs of CMAC in term of TA at 25 people with various contract durations, representing 370 men/months⁷³.
- The report noticed a recurrent problem at CMAC : most of the documentation, procedures and management documents has been produced by the TAs but are often not used or updated correctly. Moreover, it remains sometimes unclear if all this has been officially adopted or rejected by CMAC.
- The evaluation team recognized that management responsibilities are “*about to be fully in the hands of Cambodian management*” but analyzed the situation and the needs of the various departments in term of technical assistance. The report generally concludes that the capacity of the mid and high management level of the organization still needs to be developed and provides some indications about the various TA positions that would still be necessary for a limited duration. As such, the report recommended extending the position of the Quality Assurance and Audit Section TA provided by NPA.

Being an evaluation of a UNDP project, the evaluation report does not target the assistance provided by other donors. However, it has underlined problems and weaknesses – since the beginning of the UNDP projects Phases I and II – which are of interest for all organizations and donors willing to provide technical assistance.

Those conclusions can be used to ensure most efficient use of TA resources in the future. The report regrets that⁷⁴ :

- The design of the technical assistance packages have been developed by donor agencies with little or no consultation with CMAC,
- The role of technical assistance has been understood differently from both sides, leading to misunderstandings, frustrations and confusion.
- Some TAs lack teaching skills, many rotated too fast and could not deliver anything concrete, others considered their mission only from an operational perspective and – finally – some also lack cultural sensitivity.

Although the report does not include strong and definitive conclusions and/or assessments about technical assistance provided to CMAC, it gives the general impression that this process was of poor quality, although it recognized that CMAC staff capacity has increased since the beginning of the operations.

It should not be a surprise to anyone that massive, donor driven, uncoordinated, unsuitable, and inappropriate technical assistance has been a very cost-inefficient way of building capacity of CMAC staff and resulted into a substantial waste of resources⁷⁵. It is probably not a pure coincidence if CMAC crisis took place at the same time as the technical assistance system reached its limit.

⁷² TEM UNDP Phase III Project, Page 54.

⁷³ See Annex A 13 : TEM UNDP Phase III Project estimation of TA needs.

⁷⁴ TEM UNDP Phase III Project, Page 62

⁷⁵ Although it should be recognized that the funds used to provide technical advisors would not necessarily have been transformed totally into grants to CMAC if that kind of assistance had been reduced earlier.

As it seems obvious today that it was impossible, for CMAC as well as the UNDP PC, to efficiently coordinate a so high number of TAs, the decrease of their number was unavoidable, and has been accentuated by the decrease of CMAC resources. CMAC therefore modified the initial concept of “one-to-one” capacity building mechanism – considered as not efficient⁷⁶ - to have TAs providing assistance to a complete department or having a more horizontal position.

At the same time, the national ownership and leadership have been reasserted⁷⁷, and all TAs have now to report directly to the Director General.

Recommendations No 6 : Ownership of Technical Assistance.

CMAC has to continue to own the process of designing, selecting, managing and monitoring all TAs.

CMAC should be involved in defining the ToR, the job description and defining precisely the expected outputs from the TA to avoid frustrations and disappointments.

CMAC should define precise reporting mechanisms for its TAs and should encourage donor organizations to ensure also their own monitoring of the TA.

⁷⁶ TEM UNDP Phase III Project, Page 54

⁷⁷ National ownership and leadership had been reasserted in the document “A New Development Co-operation Paradigm for Cambodia” prepared for the Consultative Group meeting of May 2000. Reference to those concepts will guide the discussions of the National Symposium of Mine Action that took place few months later (November 2000).

8. CONSTRAINTS AND OPPORTUNITIES

When reviewing the reporting period (1996-2003), it is necessary to mention that those years went through several severe social and political events that inevitably caused instability and turmoil in the country. Some of those events are external to CMAC and apparently did not cause too much trouble for the organization. If looked more carefully, it is however obvious that political instability which followed the July 1997 events and the 1998 national elections had an impact on CMAC. It is even believed that the CMAC crisis arising in 1999 and 2000 can also be partly explained by the political context of the preceding years.

The CMAC crisis itself had naturally a tremendous negative impact on CMAC staff and resulted in massive loss of confidence and the departure of many senior managers. Another major impact has been the drop of donors commitment that resulted, in October 2000, in laying off of nearly 2,000 staff.

In term of technical assistance, the overall capacity building process was severely disrupted; many CMAC staff left the organization and there has been the high turn over of technical advisors, especially at the PC position.

The crisis was so serious that some observers even said that it was amazing for CMAC to have overcome such a painful period. However, it is also believed that those hardships had also more positive outcomes.

The crisis forced the RGC to reorganize in depth the legal and institutional framework of the mine action sector by creating the Cambodian Mine Action and Victims Assistance Authority (CMAA). This new official institution is now in charge of coordinating and regulating the mine action sector and is attached to the Council of Ministers.

This reform has finally placed the government in the position of developing and leading the national mine action strategy as recommended by IMAS and in line with the spirit of the Ottawa Convention⁷⁸.

For CMAC, the move has been positive too as it allowed to transfer to the CMAA the responsibility of coordinating and regulating mine action activities and encouraged the organization to work on its own reform and focus on its core operations.

The RGC invited the new CMAC management to engage into a salutary managerial reform process. The crisis encouraged donors to be more attentive when designing and negotiating their support to CMAC in order to avoid renewing mistakes from the past. Finally, the donor community had fully recognized the transfer of CMAC management responsibility into national hands.

The increased involvement of the Government into the sector created a positive momentum favoring the reform process and encouraged CMAC staff to improve their professional behavior and have an increased respect for official procedures, rules and regulations.

The crisis acted as an electroshock for the RGC, the donors and CMAC and all partners had to rethink their modus operandi, including the use and the role of TAs. For Cambodian officials, the crisis highlighted the profound involvement of foreign donors and organizations in the overall management of an official Cambodian organization and therefore induced a strong political will to

⁷⁸ Some donors nevertheless did not appreciate that the elaboration of the Royal Decree creating the CMAA had been done in emergency and without proper consultation with them. The appointment of HE Sam Sotha, former Director General of CMAC removed by the Prime Minister in August 1999, as Secretary General of the new regulatory body had also been moderately appreciated by some other donors.

decrease such an external influence by reducing sharply the number of foreign technical advisors⁷⁹.

The CMAC crisis definitely reinforced the ownership and the involvement of the Government in the sector creating an opportunity for a healthier environment and for an improved utilization of the technical assistance. Guidelines were developed to better manage that kind of assistance⁸⁰ : regular reporting to DG is required, development of the ToR is now done by jointly CMAC and the donor organization, ToR clearly mention expected outputs of the TA mission, setting up of an “integrated” approach replacing the former one-to-one system.

This period was also the opportunity to reaffirm basic principles : TAs are supposed to advise and assist but do not take decision; TAs are not supposed to exercise administrative or financial control on their counterparts, such an attitude being detrimental to the transfer of skills and knowledge to national counterpart; TAs are not supposed to represent or defend the interests of their organization of origin.

However, to ensure that CMAC takes full benefit of the costly presence of international TAs, the AT considers that progresses are still possible in the coordination between the TAs themselves and between CMAC and the donors⁸¹. It is therefore necessary to preserve a good communication and an active coordination among them.

Recommendation No 7 : Monthly TA Meetings.

CMAC should ensure that the existing principle of a monthly TA meeting between the management and the TA is enforced. Those meetings are very important to review the progress made by TAs, assess future training needs, discuss the general situation of the organization and define the general direction it has to take.

⁷⁹ In reference to the speech of Prime Minister Hun Sen at the National Symposium on Mine Action in November 2000.

⁸⁰ CMAC IWP 2002, Pages 32 and 33.

⁸¹ See Recommendation No 1.

9. GENERAL ASSESSMENT OF NPA TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE TO CMAC

9.1. Strategy, evolution and general level of satisfaction

Although NPA did not really develop its own strategy in providing technical assistance to CMAC, it has always maintained a pragmatic approach that allowed - most of the time - the delivery of valuable and appropriate assistance to the beneficiary organization.

NPA position had always been to coordinate closely with the UNDP PC in order to complement what the UN or other donor organizations were providing. After the UN stopped to play this role, NPA had to work directly with CMAC and engaged in a constructive dialogue with CMAC on the continuation of NPA technical assistance.

In the beginning of the target period (roughly before the crisis), NPA concentrated mostly on DU1 for historic reasons and provided TAs assisting the DU in the implementation of the operations or in the delivery of support services.

The provision of those TAs followed the general approach conveyed by other donor organizations and the strategy was not particularly original or creative. NPA TAs used to stay in position for long periods and sometimes gave the impression to do the same things forever without a properly defined work plan. The TA reports collected for this period – when they exist – remain vague, unstructured and do not really outline the concrete achievements of those efforts. The AT could hardly find any thorough ToR for the TAs working in this period.

Although it should be noted that the TAs working in this first period have generally been appreciated positively by their counterparts, it has also to be understood that CMAC requirements in term of achievements and monitoring of the TAs were quite modest as the technical assistance plan and deployment were mainly donor driven. The appraisal of the TAs was even out of the hands of the Cambodians and was a responsibility of the UNDP PC.

Gradually, NPA followed the general evolution of the technical assistance provided to CMAC by reducing the assistance having a military or technical character but got increasingly involved in supporting the development of CMAC management capacity. After having mostly supported the operations at the DU level, NPA concentrated more on the HA by supporting the Mine Awareness branch, the Public Relations, the Operations and the Planning departments.

The profile of the TAs changed and people with a more development oriented background gradually replaced mine action technicians with a military background. During target period of the assessment, it is evident that the quality of the documentation improved : ToR and action plans were drafted, TA reports became more regular and appraisal by NPA and the UNDP PC became customary.

Besides the transformation of the profile of the TA, NPA followed the general pattern of reducing the number of TAs during and after the crisis. In 1999, still there were 5 NPA TA within CMAC, in 2000, there were only three, two in 2001 and 2002 and only one in 2003⁸².

Following the investigations and the analysis made by the AT - and despite the fact that some individuals did not perform as expected – it can be said that, globally, NPA technical assistance effort is positively considered by CMAC management and DU staff, by other donors and organizations supporting CMAC, as well as the Norwegian Embassy in Bangkok.

⁸² In exclusion of the short term TS and Database TA.

Among the positive elements mentioned by interviewed respondents, the following can be mentioned :

- It is positively considered that NPA is a civilian and non-profit organization,
- NPA has been seen as having no political agenda in providing technical assistance to CMAC,
- NPA TAs used to stay for a longer period in their position than other TAs who sometimes rotated every six months,
- The generally good quality of NPA recruitments has been often mentioned to the AT,
- The quality of communication between NPA and CMAC has been praised by CMAC management,
- Generally speaking, NPA TAS proved to have a good cultural sensitiveness and developed friendly relations with their Cambodian colleagues,
- The solidarity of NPA in the difficult time has been very positively considered.

According to CMAC, during the last years considered by the assessment, it seems that NPA did even deliver better quality technical assistance than other organizations, including UNDP.

According to the AT, the technical assistance provided by NPA gradually became more valuable and imaginative, especially during and after the crisis. The bridging fund has already been mentioned as a positive contribution, but hard work has also been noticeable in the period of reform and restructuring of the organization. When the situation stabilized, efforts were made to review management fundamentals and basics in order to streamline, simplify and rationalize CMAC functioning, to enhance the overall quality of the outputs and increase the productivity of the operations.

Alongside other organizations, NPA positively contributed to the evolution of the mine action doctrine in Cambodia; the organization has been very active in the various forums of discussion related to mine action and always tried to encourage CMAC to adopt innovative approaches to improve the efficiency of the sector. The organization experience in development issues constitutes a precious added value that NPA can use constructively in the future. An example of such a positive contribution has been the support to the implementation of a pilot phase for the TS.

9.2. Effectiveness of the NPA capacity building exercise

It remains difficult for the AT to concretely and extensively document and assess the achievements of the NPA TAs capacity building for the early years of the target assessment period. However, for those years before the crisis, the impression is that NPA performed at least as well as other organizations and it can even be assumed that, due to the civilian character of the organization and despite the military origin of most TAs, the outputs were more significant than what could produce military contingents rotating every six months. As the NPA TAs used to stay for longer period, their integration into CMAC was reportedly better as well as their cultural understanding and sensitivity.

Assistance has been in most cases provided as planned. Counterparts generally benefited the presence of the NPA counterparts and were generally satisfied with their behavior and attitude.

The general impression of the AT is that the relevance and the effectiveness of the capacity building effort improved across the target period in parallel with the general evolution of the technical assistance arrangements. A smaller number of TAs who are more experienced in development issues and management, an increased attention to monitoring technical assistance outputs and a stronger CMAC ownership of its technical assistance most certainly resulted in an increased efficiency of the invested inputs.

As already mentioned above, in some cases, the capacity building outputs have been assessed as low, mediocre or inexistent. Fortunately, in most cases, results have been evaluated more positively as in the case of TA 5 in the mine awareness and TA 7 in the quality assurance. MM. TA 11 and TA 12, more involved in the operational and planning matters, have first actively supported the restructuring and the reform process of the organization in order to ensure its survival after the crisis but also developed management and follow up tools which allowed CMAC to improve the operational planning, the information collection capacity and the reporting system.

It is possible to elaborate at length about potentially interesting alternative methods or strategies that NPA could have used to provide capacity building to CMAC. Other evaluations and review missions already made extensive recommendations about this. Provision of long term TAs is only one of the existing mechanisms alongside short-term consultancies⁸³ or more formal academic trainings.

Long term TAs working on a one-to-one basis are indeed particularly at risk of losing all the benefits of their efforts in case the counterparts leave the organization. That kind of risk is already minimized when TAs provide support through a department or have a more horizontal position within the organization. Short-term consultancies have the main advantage to give more time and flexibility to the supported organization to absorb the TA contribution and adapt it to the local situation; but that system is probably slower.

Across the target period of the evaluation, NPA did not realistically have the choice of adopting alternative capacity building systems.

In the early years, it is likely that those questions did not cross the mind of many people and it has to be remembered that those who even dared to recommend a shift from a military style technical assistance into a more civilian system were not really heard within the mine action community. In addition, NPA assistance was strongly integrated into the UNDP TA system and there was little room for more innovative approaches.

During and after the crisis, the emergency was to reform and maintain the organization alive, not to go into theoretical prospective. It is only when the situation stabilized that the lessons learned of the crisis could be analyzed and different systems proposed and tried. And even during this last period, CMAC seems to have made a correct use of the two remaining NPA TAs and it cannot be said that another arrangement would have brought more benefit to CMAC.

If the national mine action institutional framework had been set up in a different way, then certainly, the technical assistance would have been organized much differently, and probably more efficiently. But it is always easier to judge retrospectively and we have today the experience and the benefit of hindsight. Let's only say that in ten years the mine action sector has become much more mature than it was in the beginning of the nineties.

9.3. Recruitment and Monitoring of TA

- Recruitment of TA

Recruitment of NPA TAs has not always been optimal; some of the TA did have professional skills but did obviously not show appropriate character of attitude. Others had little or no particular skills to perform as TA. CMAC clearly expressed its negative opinion on TAs who actually come to learn their work in Cambodia; CMAC also insisted that the TAs should have the correct attitude in regard to the cultural context.

⁸³ Two UN consultants in Finance and Human Resources provide support according to this system.

The AT tried to see if recruitments were more successful when done by NPA HQ than by the field office. But, actually, no clear conclusion could be done about this issue as, in both cases, some had been positive and others were more questionable.

However, as a coincidence, all recruitments of NPA TAs with a civilian/development background have been managed by the field office in Phnom Penh while the “military” TAs were recruited by the HQ⁸⁴.

It is fortunate that CMAC has been increasingly involved in the recruitment process; it was not always the case in the early years of the target period. Such an involvement should of course continue to be ensured.

When the need to recruit a TA occurs, CMAC and the donor organization should define a rigorous selection process and form an evaluation committee that should include a representative of CMAC top management, the Director of the Human Resources Department, the chief of the Department related to the TA position and a representative from the donor organization⁸⁵.

- Evaluation, monitoring and reporting.

The documentation collected by the AT does not allow considering that the monitoring of the NPA TA was particularly well developed and satisfactory.

In the early years, it looks like NPA mostly left the monitoring of its TAs to the UNDP. Although that system seemed to have some logic, it overestimates the monitoring capacity of the PC. In some cases, the AT found contradictions between very positive PC appraisals and the reality. CMAC opinion about TAs did not seem to play an important role in monitoring TAs achievements.

The NPA RR did also realize evaluations, at least at the end of the contract period of the TAs. The objective was mainly to recommend or not the reappointment of those TAs in their current position or in another NPA mission. Those appraisals were not necessarily used as a guidance mechanism for the TA during their mission.

The situation improved progressively and greater attention was gradually given to assessment and monitoring. For the last TAs, regular appraisals were made and CMAC became much more diligent in monitoring TAs outputs. However, the present assessment mission is the first external evaluation of the NPA technical assistance program since 1995; it is of course recommended to increase the frequency of such evaluations.

Without proper and detailed ToR, it is impossible to conduct an accurate evaluation of TAs outputs. The AT did not find the ToR for many of the NPA TAs operating in the beginning of the target period. When found, the ToR and job description remained very succinct.

Gradually, greater attention had been given to the preparation of the ToR and, especially after the crisis, CMAC took more responsibility in drafting the ToR detailing its expectations.

Weaknesses have been identified in the reporting mechanism, not so much with the quarterly reporting system (although those reports were apparently not always provided and properly recorded⁸⁶) that provides some indications about TAs activities and progresses, but rather with the

⁸⁴ Is this due to a lack of recruitment capacity for such positions at the HQ or a lack of interest for such TA profiles ?

⁸⁵ See Annex A 12 : Proposed Recruitment Process for Technical Advisors for CMAC. It should be noted that some donors do the recruitment themselves and then seek CMAC approval on the selected candidate.

⁸⁶ The reporting from the NPA Community Development project looks stronger and more exhaustive.

end of mission reports. Most NPA TA spent many years in country but very little attention had been given to capitalize their experience and outputs.

When existing, end of mission reports are very short and do not provide adequate information about what the TA had delivered during his mission. They are sometimes full of petty and unprofessional considerations. In 2000, NPA took action on this issue and drafted reporting guidelines and an end of mission report format⁸⁷. Improvements have been noticed at the end of the target period of the evaluation⁸⁸.

Recommendations No 8 : Management of Technical Advisors.

- *CMAC and the donor organization should define a rigorous selection and recruitment process involving both partners.*
- *CMAC should participate into the drafting of the ToR; the chief of the Department related to the TA position should be consulted as well as potential counterparts; ToR should indicate the chosen methodology (working on a one-to-one approach or a more horizontal approach).*
- *CMAC and the donor organization should ensure that the ToR are comprehensive and detail clearly the expected outputs of the TA mission.*
- *Donor organizations should conduct regular written appraisals of their TAs.*
- *CMAC should also conduct appraisals of its TAs in order to help the TAs to remain focused on CMAC expectations.*
- *CMAC and the donor organization should demand the TA to document the progress of his mission and produce a comprehensive end of mission report on his outputs. This is essential for the capitalization exercise.*
- *In coordination with CMAC, the donor organization should commission regular external evaluations that will help CMAC and the donor organization to validate or invalidate the developed strategies and eventually re-orientate the direction of the program.*

⁸⁷ See Annex A 14 : Reporting guidelines and End of Mission report format.

⁸⁸ As a sign of such progress, see, in Annex A 14, the detailed ToR of the two MDD TAs.

10. NEEDS AND EXPECTATIONS FOR ADDITIONAL FUTURE TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

The two last NPA TAs in CMAC (Planning/Operations and TS/Database) will leave their positions at the end of March 2004.

During the conduct of this evaluation, the AT collected recommendations and opinions from a large number of respondents on the future needs of CMAC in terms of technical assistance. Most, if not all, of the respondents strongly expressed the view that, despite undisputable progresses, CMAC was still in need of technical assistance. Areas as finances and support services in general were often mentioned as well as the always pointed out human resources management. It was sometimes suggested to reposition one TA in each of the DU. The general issue of database is obviously also a concern for CMAC management. No particular long-term technical assistance has been requested within the Operations and Planning Department⁸⁹, the possibility to have short term missions intervening on very precise management issues has been mentioned.

CMAC did not clearly and strongly express to the AT the will to see NPA continuing the provision of specific technical assistance in the future but instead seemed open and ready to discuss and consider any potential contributions and options.

Some respondents gave the impression that it might be the right time for NPA to stop its technical assistance to CMAC, or at least the long term one. The Royal Norwegian Embassy in Bangkok⁹⁰ expressed similar feelings by explaining that, after assistance had been provided for so many years, it may be the occasion of NPA to phase out its technical support to CMAC⁹¹.

On this issue, NPA may possibly share such an idea, however, the AT would rather recommend NPA to remain active in supporting CMAC; firstly because the needs are still evident, secondly because of the NPA capacity to provide in general a valuable and well targeted assistance. NPA has indeed a good internal knowledge of CMAC and the mine action sector in Cambodia in general but has also the capacity to mainstream mine action and development. This last question will become more and more essential as mine action will gradually be linked with and integrated into rural development programs⁹².

Various ideas had been floated and discussed during the assessment mission by CMAC management, CMAC staff or other people interviewed. Logically, due to its current involvement in the TS pilot phase and in the MDD, NPA should take interest into the activities related to the risk reduction concept.

As recommended by TA 13 TS End of Mission report⁹³, one of the essential tasks to be tackled in the near future by CMAC will be the integration, reorganization and articulation of the different CMAC instruments related to risk reduction activities : TS, CBMRR, CMT, MRT and MDD. This is a complex task where CMAC will certainly need help. The AT considers that a long term TA (minimum 1 year) will be necessary to achieve an efficient interaction between those tools.

<i>Recommendation No 9 : Provision of a Risk Reduction TA.</i>
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⁸⁹ In his draft End of Mission Report, TA 11 confirms “that there is no need for a full time advisor” to replace him.

⁹⁰ Interview of HE Ragne Birte Lund, Norwegian Ambassador, and Ms Ingunn Vatne, First Secretary on 4/3/04.

⁹¹ This opinion may be motivated by the NORAD decision to phase out from Cambodia and refocus its assistance to certain defined countries. Norwegian assistance to Cambodian will remain possible through NGOs, UN agencies and the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

⁹² As rightly noticed by HE Ragne Birte Lund.

⁹³ And also mentioned by many respondents.

NPA should consider positively a request by CMAC to provide technical assistance to facilitate the integration and reorganization of the different tools and operational units related to risk reduction. A 1 year full time mission should be considered by a TA who has a strong knowledge of CMAC and the Cambodian mine action sector. It looks sensible to start the process in one DU before enlarging it when successfully tested.

Risk factors.

The provision of such assistance should be conditioned to some elements in order to achieve what is intended :

- *In order to avoid increased workload for the Director of the Operations and Planning Department, it is imperative to create a position of “risk reduction manager” – beside the Director of this Department and under his supervision – who will capitalize on the TA support and continue the job after the TA leaves the position.*
- *In his TS End of Mission report, TA 13 indicates that the integration exercise will be placed under the responsibility of the DU Operations Officer. It is likely that such a task will be too heavy for those individuals. It may be the opportunity for CMAC to develop a real Operations Management team at the DU level to tackle this issue with the help of the TA and the HQ “risk reduction manager”. In addition, this will positively support the decentralization process of the organization.*
- *Finding a TA who has a good knowledge of Cambodia and of all CMAC risk reduction tools will be a challenge.*

The support provided by TA 14 to the TS project (revision of the SoP) and the database is much appreciated by his counterparts who indicated they would positively recommend an extension for TA 14 to allow him to pursue the ongoing tasks.

The need to continue a support to the database is obvious as CMAC has now 2 different applications (the “old” one and the application developed by TA 14); hopefully, in the future, TA 14 application may be selected as the only database application for CMAC, as it looks it responds adequately to the needs of the organization. If it is the case, there will be a need to integrate the existing information into the new database.

In addition, monitoring the TS SoP remains a vital mission to ensure the successful long term continuation of this activity by CMAC.

Recommendation No 10 : TA Database.

NPA should engage in discussions with CMAC to consider the extension of the technical assistance provided to the database and the TS project for another 6 months after the current contract of TA 14 terminates.

11. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

11.1. Conclusion

It is the opinion of the AT that the technical assistance provided by NPA to CMAC for the period 1996 to 2003 has been generally of good quality, effective and responsive to the needs of CMAC. In various occasions, NPA also supported innovative approaches.

Although the situation of CMAC has certainly improved in terms of capacity development during the period considered by this assessment, it remains indispensable to continue supporting capacity building within the organization. It is unrealistic to consider that all the needs are fulfilled in term of capacity development and that CMAC has reached its top in term of efficiency, transparency and good governance⁹⁴.

In addition to these observations, it has to be recognized that CMAC engaged in new projects and pilots in order to adapt the general organization, operating procedures and resources deployment of the organization to the evolution of the general mine action "doctrine" in Cambodia and abroad. Such an effort by CMAC is laudable as it improving the efficiency and the productivity of the organization.

But these regular attempts to progress further permanently modify the existing order and makes it necessary for CMAC to be accompanied in this changing environment. In these circumstances, the need to provide some technical assistance to the organization remains significant first to help in the development phase of a new project, but also to assist in transformation of those new concepts into smooth and well-integrated activities.

Thanks to its particular added value and its long experience and commitment in supporting CMAC, it is believed that NPA still does have the possibility to play a positive, useful and active role in supporting CMAC and the mine action sector in Cambodia.

Cambodia is still one of the most mine affected countries in the world. Fortunately the number of victims has decreased these last years and the understanding of the complex consequences of the presence of mines and UXO has improved.

However, for the affected communities, the necessity to address promptly the problem remains critical and the mine action sector will have soon to face challenging situations as the necessity to further integrate into development and the anticipated decline of available resources that will force a complete reorganization of organizations like CMAC. A lot of work remains ahead.

11.2. Recommendations

- **Recommendation No 1 : Donors Coordination**

CMAC should develop a technical assistance plan – based on a functional needs analysis - that will be presented and discussed with its donors in order to inform them about the needs and facilitate the offer for assistance and its complementarity.

⁹⁴ The recent "white paper" published in December 2003 focusing specifically on discipline and respect of regulations illustrates that fact that the situation is still not ideal.

Regular meetings (for example twice a year) between donors and CMAC on the issue of technical assistance would harmoniously complement bilateral contacts that CMAC maintains with its donors. Such a meeting would allow all donors to better coordinate their support and to have the same general understanding of the situation and the progresses made by the organization.

▪ **Recommendation No 2 : ISO Certification.**

CMAC should remain modest when communicating about the ISO certification to donors or to the Government. First, the certification only applies to a department of 23 people and, secondly, if the department loses the certification later on, the potential negative impact will be in proportion with the publicity made at the time of the certification. It is likely better to remain discreet and to work hard to maintain the level of quality.

▪ **Recommendation No 3 : NPA DU 1 Monitor.**

The NPA DU 1 monitor should have the opportunity to report his findings directly to CMAC management to make sure that the real situation in the field is accurately known at the top level of the organization.

▪ **Recommendation No 4 : Externalization of the monitoring system.**

It is the opinion of the AT that an external and independent monitoring system will be much more efficient than an internal one and should lead to spectacular improvements in the discipline enforcement and the respect of regulations and procedures. It is therefore recommended to CMAC to consider contracting an external and independent monitoring body for all its field operations; a pilot phase could be run in a limited number of DU before being gradually enlarged.

▪ **Recommendation No 5 : NPA Mine Action Policy.**

The NPA mine action unit at the headquarter should engage in consultations with the various resident representatives of the organization to elaborate a general mine action strategy integrated into the larger NPA development plans. When such a strategy will be produced, it will support the development of a policy paper in each country. Such a strategy can remain pragmatic and in line with the needs expressed by national counterpart organizations but it should also emphasize the latest developments and thinking in the sector as well as more innovative concepts as risk reduction or community liaison.

▪ **Recommendations No 6 : Ownership of Technical Assistance.**

CMAC has to continue to own the process of designing, selecting, managing and monitoring all TAs.

CMAC should be involved in defining the ToR, the job description and defining precisely the expected outputs from the TA to avoid frustrations and disappointments.

CMAC should define precise reporting mechanisms for its TAs and should encourage donor organizations to ensure also their own monitoring of the TA.

▪ **Recommendation No 7 : Monthly TA Meetings.**

CMAC should ensure that the existing principle of a monthly TA meeting between the management and the TA is enforced. Those meetings are very important to review the progress made by TAs, assess future training needs, discuss the general situation of the organization and define the general direction it has to take.

▪ **Recommendations No 8 : Management of Technical Advisors.**

- o CMAC and the donor organization should define a rigorous selection and recruitment process involving both partners.
- o CMAC should participate into the drafting of the ToR; the chief of the Department related to the TA position should be consulted as well as potential counterparts; ToR should indicate the chosen methodology (working on a one-to-one approach or a more horizontal approach).
- o CMAC and the donor organization should ensure that the ToR are comprehensive and detail clearly the expected outputs of the TA mission.
- o Donor organizations should conduct regular written appraisals of their TAs.
- o CMAC should also conduct appraisals of its TAs in order to help the TAs to remain focused on CMAC expectations.
- o CMAC and the donor organization should demand the TA to document the progress of his mission and produce a comprehensive end of mission report on his outputs. This is essential for the capitalization exercise.
- o In coordination with CMAC, the donor organization should commission regular external evaluation missions that will help CMAC and the donor organization to validate or invalidate the developed strategies and eventually re-orientate the direction of the program.

▪ **Recommendation No 9 : Provision of a Risk Reduction TA**

NPA should consider positively a request by CMAC to provide technical assistance to facilitate the integration and reorganization of the different tools and operational units related to risk reduction. A 1 year full time mission should be considered by a TA who has a strong knowledge of CMAC and the Cambodian mine action sector. It looks sensible to start the process in one DU before enlarging it when successfully tested.

Risk factors.

The provision of such assistance should nevertheless be conditioned to some elements in order to achieve what is intended in the planned period :

- o In order to avoid increased workload for the Director of the Operations and Planning Department, it is imperative to create a position of “risk reduction manager” – beside the Director of this Department and under his supervision – who will be able to capitalize on the TA support and continue the job after the TA leaves the position.

- o In his TS End of Mission report, TA 13 indicates that the integration exercise will be placed under the responsibility of the DU Operations Officer. It is likely that such a task will be too heavy for those individuals. It may be the opportunity for CMAC to develop a real Operations Management team at the DU level to tackle this issue with the help of the TA and the HQ “risk reduction manager”. In addition, this will positively support the decentralization process of the organization.
- o Finding a TA who has a good knowledge of Cambodia and of all CMAC risk reduction tools will be a challenge.

▪ **Recommendation No 10 : TA Database.**

NPA should engage in discussions with CMAC to consider the extension of the technical assistance provided to the database and the TS project for another 6 months after the current contract of TA 14 terminates.

12. LIST OF ANNEXES

- A 1 : ToR of the Assessment Mission
- A 2 : Schedule of the Assessment Mission
- A 3 : Events Chronology
- A 4 : Two Discussion Papers by R. McCarthy and P. Simon
- A 5 : Reallocation of Norad Grant
- A 6 : NPA RR Guideline for drafting Mine Action Strategy
- A 7 : Strategy for Mine Action 1999 – 2002 for NPA
- A 8 : Humanitarian Mine Action, a Country Strategy. 5/2/00.
- A 9 : NPA Mine Action Policy
- A 10 : UNDP Phase III Project Terminal Evaluation Mission : Estimation of Capacity Building Requirements.
- A 11 : Proposed Recruitment Process
- A 12 : End of Mission Report Guideline
- A 13: Reporting Guidelines and End of Mission report format

- A 14 : Documents related to TA 4
 - TA 4 Terms of Reference

- A 15 : Documents related to TA 5
 - Presentation of Mine Awareness
 - Mine Awareness Curriculum
 - Documents related to the Mine Awareness Seminar held in CMAC in January 2000

- A 16 : Documents related to TA 6
 - TA 6 Terms of Reference

- A 17 : Documents related to TA 8
 - TA 8 Terms of Reference
 - Internal Quality Audit Function within CMAC (February 2002)
 - Integration of International Quality Audit operations and Monitoring and Evaluation at the Training Center (March 2002)

- A 18 : Documents related to TA 9
 - TA 9 Terms of Reference

- A 19 : Documents related to TA 11
 - Liste des Apports les plus significatifs en developpement du programme qualité
 - Presentation of the Cost Database (15/2/02)
 - Quality Procedures 11 to 18

- A 20 : Documents related to M. TA 12
 - TA 12 Terms of Reference
 - TS Concept
 - TS Report Formats

- A 21 : Documents related to TA 13
 - TA 13 Terms of Reference

- A 22: Documents related to TA 14
 - TA 14 Terms of Reference 1 (05/03 to 09/03)
 - TA 14 Terms of Reference 2 (12/03 to 03/04)
 - Work plan for the period 12/03 to 03/04)
 - Technical Survey Database Presentation

