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United Nations Mine Action Centre

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A Guide on Transitioning

Mine Action Programmes

to National Ownership



UNMAS

GICHD | CIDHG





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

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**A GUIDE ON TRANSITIONING MINE ACTION PROGRAMMES
TO NATIONAL OWNERSHIP**

APRIL 2013



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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

APMBC	Anti-personnel Mine Ban Convention
CCM	Convention on Cluster Munitions
CCW	Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons
CRPD	Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities
ERW	Explosive Remnant of War
GICHD	Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining
HQ	Headquarter
IMSMA	Information Management System for Mine Action
KPI	Key Performance Indicator
MA	Mine Action
MBT	Mine Ban Treaty
MC	Monitoring Committee
MP	Monitoring Plan
MRE	Mine Risk Education
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
UN	United Nations

At the heart of the global mine action approach is the principle that ultimate responsibility for the landmine and explosive remnants of war problem rests with the State under whose jurisdiction the contamination exists.

This principle has long been recognised, including by relevant instruments of international law. Therefore mine-affected states and the international community have implemented specific activities to fulfil this responsibility of national ownership and approach the problem in ways that ensure sustainability, establish capacity and adhere to international standards and good practice.

Approaches to transition have differed, sometimes widely, and results have been mixed. There is also limited information available that documents and analyses the different types and phases of transition. Furthermore, there is only limited guidance on how to plan and implement the transition of UN-managed mine action programmes to national ownership.

In response, in 2010 and 2011, the GICHD commissioned nine country case studies to highlight some of the various contexts, processes and challenges of mine action programmes transitioning to national ownership.

Based on the lessons learnt and the good practices highlighted in the case studies, the GICHD, in collaboration with UNMAS, produced this Guide to Transitioning Mine Action Programmes to National Ownership. The Guide aims to provide hands-on guidance on how to plan and implement transition processes.

Ambassador Stephan Husy
Director

Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining





INTRODUCING TRANSITION

INTRODUCTION

This guide focuses on transitioning mine action programmes¹ to national ownership. The GICHD and United Nations Mine Action Service (UNMAS) commissioned case studies of transition in nine mine/ERW-affected countries to provide the evidence base for this guide.² The case studies document programme implementation in very different environments – from least developed to developing countries and from low to very high levels of land-mine/ERW contamination. Regardless of context, mine action programmes in all nine countries have achieved significant progress in clearance, stock-pile destruction, Mine Risk Education (MRE) and even victim assistance. Many lives have been saved, the survivors helped and the contamination of all nine countries has been reduced or practically eliminated, with new victims at an all-time low.

Transition to national ownership, however, emerges as the most difficult of mine action goals to achieve. Lack of progress in transition to national ownership does not imply poorly run mine action programmes and does not in any way reduce what local authorities and their international partners have accomplished. The studies just tell us that transition is difficult and suggest reasons why.³

Based on lessons learnt from these case studies, this guide suggests a process for national mine action authorities, with the support of other stakeholders, to define transition goals appropriate to national circumstances. Once consensus about those goals has been achieved through a participative review involving all major stakeholders, this guide can help:

- > assess country-specific conditions that will impact on a transition process;
- > design a country transition plan with a clearly defined end goal; and
- > develop an implementation work-plan that includes a monitoring component to continually record successes and mitigate shortcomings.

The guide is written primarily for National Mine Action Authorities and National Mine Action Centres. A secondary, but important audience comprises the UN entities that support mine action, particularly UN staff at country level. Donors supporting transition and non-governmental organisations (NGOs) providing support for capacity development will also find this guide useful.

All mine-affected countries are on first and foremost varying paths to transition. Whatever the path, national authorities must take control over and lead the transition process, although support from other stakeholders is vital.

DEFINITION: WHAT IS TRANSITION?

All major stakeholders in the mine action community agree that nations affected by mines/ERW own the problem. The Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention (APMBC)⁴ places responsibility for the landmine problem with affected states. Mine affected states naturally assert their sovereign control of their territory and the problems that occur within that territory. From a sustainable development perspective, the UN stresses the importance of national ownership.

Yet in the early days of mine action in the late 1980s, national ownership in most cases was more of an aspiration than a reality. Mine action programmes were typically started in the midst of post-conflict upheavals and international experts and organisations were brought in to start activities, save lives, and consolidate what was often a fragile peace process. Decisions about national sustainability and governance were put off to be addressed in the future when conditions permitted. By the late 1990s, however, pressure from governments of mine-affected countries and international agencies to reform mine action structures and practices and move to national control had grown strong and the mine action community began to more aggressively experiment how to transition programmes to national ownership.

There are differing interpretations of what transition means in the mine action context. It is important to note that nationalisation of mine action programmes (ie having national staff in the key management and technical positions) is not to be confused with national ownership – the former is a pre-condition for, but not a guarantor of success of the latter.

For the purposes of this guide, transition refers to the process through which the international community reduces its financial and technical support, as the affected state develops the required national programme management capabilities that lead to national ownership. Successful transition will only occur when these parallel components have been reasonably effective, and should therefore be viewed as a joint endeavour with the affected state having lead responsibility for establishing national structures. The 2009 Cartagena Second Review Conference elaborated on the growing understanding in the mine action community that national ownership is multi-faceted:

The States Parties have come to recognize that strong national ownership is essential for ensuring that cooperation can flourish. Mine-affected States Parties themselves have remarked that national ownership in the clearance of anti-personnel mines and other explosive hazards implies, inter alia, the following five components:

(i) high level interest and leadership in fulfilling mine clearance obligations, (ii) a national authority empowered and provided with the human, financial and material capacity to carry out its responsibilities, (iii) a clear understanding of the size, location

INTRODUCING TRANSITION

and quality of the Article 5 implementation challenge or a commitment to promptly acquire such an understanding, (iv) a realistic but not unambitious plan to complete implementation of Article 5 as soon as possible and, (v) a regular significant national financial commitment to the State's own humanitarian demining programme.

It has been noted that, while the existence of these components will not guarantee that resources will flow in response to needs, demonstrating national ownership makes it significantly more likely that cooperation will flourish between those with needs and those in a position to provide assistance.⁵

Finally, transition is simply one aspect of mine action and reflects neither the end of mine action nor the end of international cooperation in mine action. It is a transfer of authority and control to the national authority. The degree of authority and control may vary to accommodate different national realities.

Most of the mine action programmes studied exhibit a high degree of nationalisation, which can sometimes confuse thinking about national ownership. UN-managed and UN-supported programmes, as well as those implemented by NGOs, have helped train highly competent local staff and place them in technical and managerial positions in eight of the nine countries reviewed. Nationalised programmes can be overwhelmingly dependent on external support and not integrated into government structures and, thus, are not truly owned by national authorities.

TRANSITION TO WHAT – A NOTE OF CAUTION

What is the end state when transition is complete? Affected states, the UN and donors may all answer differently. While an affected state may look at this question from the point of view of scarce resources and opportunity costs, the UN might look at the question through the lens of sustainable development or meeting mandate objectives. Donors may be driven by a commitment to help states meet treaty obligations. Each approach is valid – in its own terms. Ultimately, however, ownership by the affected state means that it has the final authority to define what constitutes national ownership and to determine how best to get there. External support, however, will sometimes be needed. It is therefore imperative that all stakeholders have an honest discussion to reach a consensus about what the goal of transition is – and make sure that it is one that can be sustained by the affected state and meets minimum standards desired by the donors and the UN.

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In many cases, a developing country with limited personnel and resources may opt for a transition end state of considerably reduced capacity as compared to the pre-transition situation. The opportunity costs in personnel and funds may be too great for a country struggling to achieve universal literacy or provide clean drinking water. In the short term, the competition for competent government personnel and for funds will often not favour mine action. One solution is for national capacity development that occurs broadly enough to ensure that all sectors benefit, thus reducing competition. Capacity building with the necessary national reach is a very long-term proposition in most countries and is not likely to occur rapidly enough to meet the needs of transition planners.

Capacity development that focuses only on the needs of mine action programmes can also be self-defeating. Other sectors, including both the private sector and the UN, will bid up the price of the new capacity to steal it away from mine action organisations. This resource competition is not limited to inter-ministerial competition. UN capacity building programmes have succeeded in training national staff with the unintended consequence that those trained then take positions with the UN in-country or abroad.

For governments in these countries, and for donors seeking to maintain support for mine action, the only available short-term resolution is earmarked, international funding. Indeed, this has been the supply-driven solution that has created many excellent mine action programmes in the past. But transition requires a commitment of more national resources with a parallel reduction of external assistance.

The consequence of these resource constraints may be that national authorities conclude that transition does not make sense in their particular context. Sometimes national authorities may conclude that ownership is simply unaffordable and will say so. In some more ambiguous cases, national authorities may publically agree that transition is a worthy goal but will not or cannot follow through with the necessary resources. Transition in such cases may either take much longer than anticipated, in which event external support should continue until conditions more conducive to local ownership improve, or in the most impoverished contexts, transition may prove an impossible goal. The international community may have to accept this fact and develop plans for mine action without the distraction of politically correct but unrealistic transition plans that simply divert attention from the all-important job of making the country safe from mines/ERW.

INTRODUCING TRANSITION

Transition plans based on unrealistic goals waste time and money. A balance must be struck so that mine action transition does not become just another development process with no end in sight – particularly in fragile and conflict-affected countries, which are where the landmine/ERW problems tend to be.

KEY ISSUES IDENTIFIED IN THE CASE STUDIES

A number of key issues and lessons learnt emerge from the case studies that are worth highlighting to help stakeholders define the issues to be addressed when designing and implementing a transition plan.⁶ These issues will be addressed in the section on planning transition.

- > What mix of local ownership including national financing and external resource mobilisation is required to sustain the programme?
- > Do high-level national capacities for planning, management and coordination exist? If not, is there a plan to support capacity development?
- > What is the residual contamination problem to be addressed post-transition and what additional training is necessary to ensure that national capacity can handle it?
- > What is the best arrangement for the long-term management of a database, one that ensures the availability of sufficient technical expertise at a cost the country can afford so that necessary mine action data is available to future project planning?
- > Good governance of the programme, including accountability, transparency, equal opportunities and responsiveness, will affect the programme's ability to attract and retain donors. How will the transition plan ensure such good governance?
- > Post transition, will the national programme remain well integrated in the international mine action community network and does it have the resources to do so?
- > Are mine action and development linked whenever appropriate in key country planning documents?

ENDNOTES

- ¹ Mine action throughout this guide refers to the three operational pillars of mine action: clearance, victim assistance and risk education.
- ² Thumbnail Sketches of each case study (Afghanistan, Azerbaijan, Albania, Cambodia, Ethiopia, Lebanon, Mozambique, Nepal, and Sudan) can be found in Annex 1 – Case Studies Thumbnail Sketches. Full reports can be found at www.gichd.org.
- ³ Taken from Lessons Learned: Case Studies of Nine Mine Affected Countries, which is included in the electronic version of this report.
- ⁴ Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on their Destruction, signed 3 December 1997 in Ottawa, Canada.
- ⁵ Final Report of the 30 November – 4 December 2009 Second Review Conference of the States Parties to the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on Their Destruction, Part II: Review of the Operation and Status of the Convention 2005-2009, paragraph 169.
- ⁶ Adapted from Azerbaijan Case Study, Chart 7, “Issues regularly faced by mature mine action programmes” (p 28) and enriched by the nine case studies on transition.





A note to national authorities of mine-affected countries:

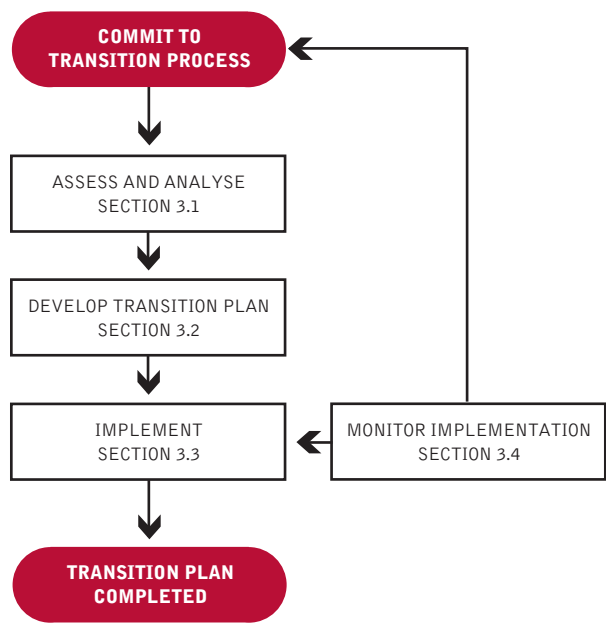
National ownership is about national rights and responsibilities. It begins when national authorities define national ownership in their own terms – not in the terms of outside consultants or agencies.

This guide provides a set of experienced-based procedures to guide the transition to national ownership. Study them, reject some, modify some and add new ones. Adopt the ones that are relevant to your circumstances. Transition is not difficult as long as the plan to be implemented is truly your own and has been embraced by key actors within your own country.

This guide provides a structured series of processes, questions, suggestions and tools, rather than a set of procedures to be followed in all circumstances. No one set of rules can do justice to the wide range of mine action programmes now being implemented in very different circumstances. Each transition plan must reflect the context in which it has been developed and in which it will be implemented.

National authorities, who are the prime agents in this process, and the UN staff, who assist them, will use the processes, questions and suggestions in this guide to help shape the assessment and analysis, planning, implementation and monitoring of a transition process appropriate to the country context. Good judgement applied to national realities may lead national authorities to alter the processes, ignoring some of the questions and suggestions. That is as it should be in a process driven by national authorities with the ultimate goal of national ownership of mine action programming.

Figure 1 | Overview of transition process map



As illustrated in Figure 1 above, the transition process may be broken down into three complementary phases: (i) assessment and analysis of capacities and capabilities, (ii) development of the plan and (iii) implementation. The order is sequential. Monitoring of the implementation provides a feedback loop to the analysis function so that lessons learnt during the on-going monitoring of the implementation can be reflected, if necessary, in a revised analysis and subsequent revision of the plan itself.⁷

The questions and suggestions are grouped according to these four activities. If a mine action programme is beginning the transition process, the questions and suggestions can be taken in turn as the process advances. If the mine action programme is in the middle of the transition process, these questions and suggestions will help to monitor progress and, where necessary, refine the plan. And if the mine action programme feels that it has achieved transition, these questions and answers may help in a final audit to confirm success or uncover the need for further activities.

MAKING TRANSITION HAPPEN: ASSESS, PLAN AND IMPLEMENT

As long as the transition assessment is honest, the transition plan objectives are clear and reasonable, and the necessary resources and capacities are available, transition implementation should not be difficult. It is simply a commitment, properly resourced and implemented with competence over a defined period of time – essentially, a project.

The process stresses focused leadership and responsibility by national bodies, underpinned by broad participation of stakeholders. The processes, questions, and suggestions that follow are beginning points. They are designed to stimulate thinking, not to constrain it. The most important thing is to begin the process and understand that it does not have to be complicated.

ASSESS THE SITUATION

The main purpose of the assessment is to identify possible issues that might either impede or actually prevent the transition from succeeding. The assessment provides the foundation for analysis. Analysis is simply a systematic look at where the mine action programme is in terms of transition. Do not fall into the trap of producing an exhaustive history of the mine action programme. This exercise should focus only on elements that are important to transition to national ownership.

The first step is to conduct an open and frank examination of the internal conditions unique to each country context that may either support the process or undermine it. This is followed by an assessment of the commitment to transition by all relevant actors; of the resources available to support the process; and the essential gender and diversity considerations. This assessment provides the input for the analysis – and the analysis provides the framework for drafting the transition plan.

The assessment and analysis should involve all key stakeholders – national authorities, the UN, donors, both actual and potential, and civil society. The role that is being played or might be played by international NGOs and, in some cases, commercial operators, should be taken into account. The process will benefit greatly if it is appropriately staffed – in large programmes, this may require the hiring of a transition officer. In all cases, the national authorities must be represented by someone with authority to make decisions and move the process forward. Failure to appoint such a person indicates a lack of commitment and should be treated as such.

Some assessments are more important than others. The case studies reveal at least three critical components of a successful transition:

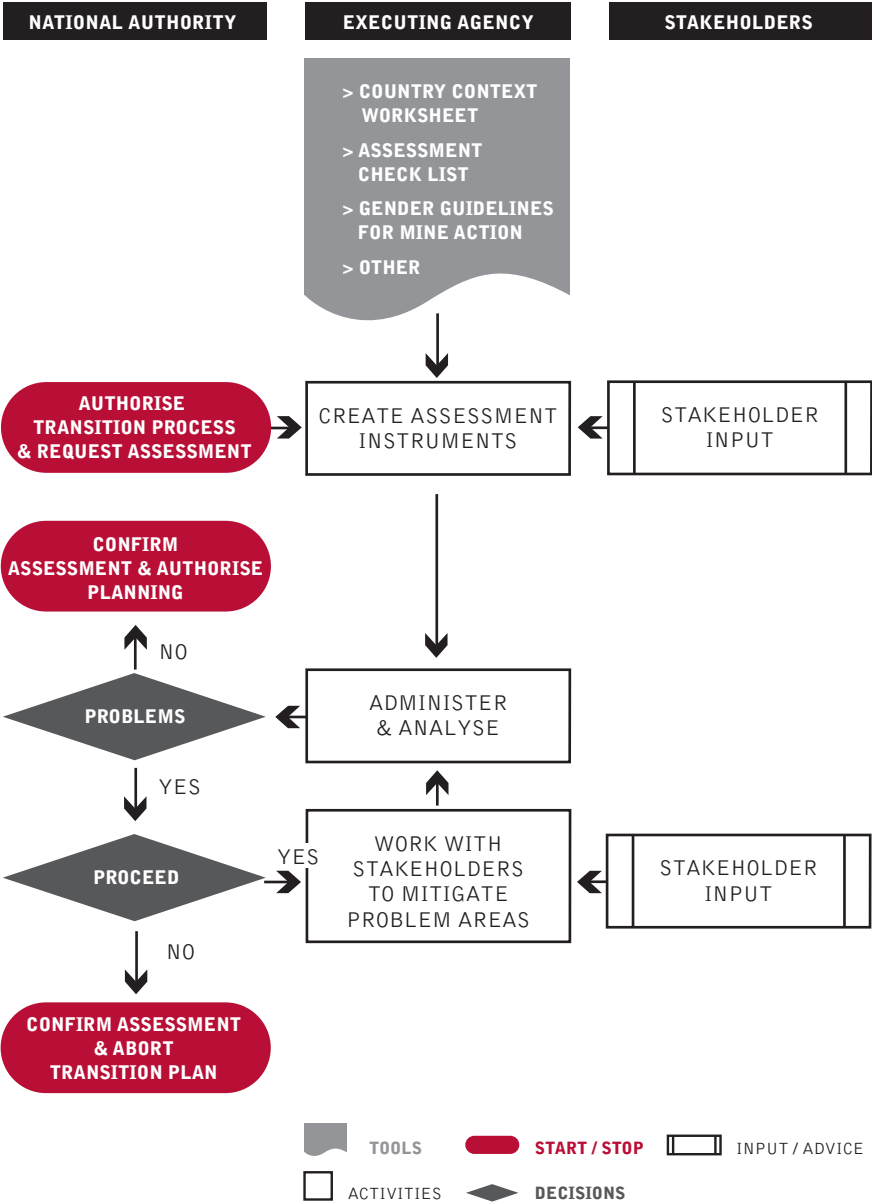
1. Consensus on the nature and size of the residual contamination and requirements for MRE and victim assistance that the post-transition structures will have to address.
2. Government commitment.
3. An effective advocate who will drive and protect the transition process.

The assessment can identify problems that may only inhibit or delay transition. The three components above, however, may be considered prerequisites – without them, transition may well fail.

ASSESSMENT PROCESS

Figure 2 – The Sample Assessment Process Map, on page 18, illustrates an assessment process. The process begins with authorisation by the national authority (top of left column) and ends when the assessment is accepted by the authority (middle of left column). If the assessment has not identified issues that may impede or prevent a successful transition, the national authority gives the go-ahead and authorises the next step – the creation of a transition plan. If the assessment identifies problems, the national authority may ask the executing authority to work with stakeholders to resolve the problems (bottom of centre column) or, if the problems seem too big, decide not to proceed with a transition process (bottom of left column). The actual implementation of the assessment rests on the executing agency appointed by the national authority (centre column). In most countries this would be the national mine action coordination centre. Stakeholders (right column) are involved in an advisory role in the formation of the assessment instruments and in advice on any mitigation efforts to correct problems as they arise. The assessment tools (top of centre column) should emphasise major issues that can be evaluated by existing, external studies. This approach should help to keep the process as simple and objective as possible.

Figure 2 | The Sample assessment process map



ASSESSING THE COUNTRY CONTEXT

A frank assessment of country context can be difficult. National pride is involved. A country sincerely trying, but obviously failing, to reduce corruption may find it difficult, politically and psychologically, to admit failure and that failure's negative impact on the transition process. Some countries – because of political or social upheaval, lack of public health and/or education levels, etc – may simply not be able to assume complete ownership of a mine action programme that meets even minimal standards. This may change in the future and the situation needs to be monitored, but making a premature commitment to transition may waste scarce human and financial resources and not accomplish the goal of national ownership.

Questions for Assessing Country Context

- > Are other resource priorities of the government negatively impacting attention to mine action?
- > Is there competition for financial and human resources in a resource-scarce environment?
- > Is the general capacity level of the government personnel sufficient to staff a transition project and sustain the mine action activities needed to manage the post-transition situation? If not, is there a realistic possibility to correct this through training and capacity development?
- > Is government instability preventing sustained commitment to all long-term planning, including for the transition of the mine action programme?
- > Are there broader security challenges/issues that could be addressed using mine action expertise, eg ammunition safety management, small arms light weapons control, etc?

Suggestions for Assessing Country Context

- > Use independent, outside sources when available and feasible.⁸

There are many international studies available on the web that analyse and often rank country capacities in education, public health, political stability, etc. These are valuable, independent and, hopefully, objective sources of information that can be useful to this assessment process.

MAKING TRANSITION HAPPEN: ASSESS, PLAN AND IMPLEMENT

- > Do not overdo it.

The purpose is to identify major constraints, not to analyse the cultural, economic and political history of the country. Focus on the elements that must be addressed if the transition is to be successful. Begin with an assessment of the current state of the five pillars of mine action.

- > Follow the assessment and analysis to their logical conclusion.

If the general situation in the country suggests transition may not be successful, then work with the stakeholders to monitor the situation for changes in the future that might put transition back on track. Alternatively, the political and socio-economic context may be so difficult, and the landmine/ERW issue so relatively small, that it makes most sense simply to continue with a largely internationally funded and managed programme until the landmine/ERW problem is eliminated. If this is the decision, make sure it is publicly acknowledged, preferably in a joint statement issued by national authorities and the relevant UN entities.

ASSESSING COMMITMENT: GOVERNMENT, THE UN AND DONORS

The transition case studies document the absolutely critical role of commitment. Commitment is evidenced by three actors: first and foremost, the government of the affected state, followed by the relevant UN entities and then the donors, who are sometimes overlooked in this process although they are critically important.

This component of the assessment and the resulting analysis may lead to a decision that the requirements for a successful transition simply do not exist. A clear-sighted decision not to pursue transition will save time and money and may better support existing commitments to the five pillars of mine action. Without commitment by the major stakeholders, efforts spent on transition are efforts wasted, which might be better put into the on-going work of mine action.

Questions for Assessing Government Commitment

It is helpful to look at commitment to transition from four perspectives drawn from exchanges on the EU's Capacity4Development website: policy, organisational mandate, high-level support (or political buy-in) and implementation.⁹ If government commitment is found to be weak or non-existent, there is little need to proceed further in the assessment until this problem is resolved.

Government commitment is an absolutely essential, though not entirely sufficient, ingredient to a successful transition. If the lack of government commitment cannot be resolved, then all stakeholders, including the government, must decide how, or even whether, to proceed with mine action in the absence of a serious transition plan.

Policy

- > Has the government explicitly asked to assume responsibility of the mine action programme? Cite the document(s).
- > Has mine action been included in major government policy documents such as the Millennium Development Goals, the national development strategy, the Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP), etc? Does the government include mine action in multi-year planning documents?
- > Has the government provided a legal framework to support transition? If, for example, a national NGO is to assume responsibility for mine clearance, has the government ensured that the laws necessary to allow such an entity to function have been written and are enforced? If not, has the government expressed a credible willingness to do so within a specific timeframe?
- > Do clearance obligations¹⁰ or humanitarian concerns take precedence over transition planning, or are they perceived to be in competition with it?

Organisational Mandate

- > Has the government designated a ministry or public body responsible for mine action in the long term?

High-Level Support or Political Buy-In

- > Is there a clear statement from a high level government official that the government is committed to implementing the transition process? Does this person have the authority, capability and motivation to drive and protect the transition process?
- > Does the government assume a growing percentage of the cost of mine action over a specific time frame?

Implementation

- > If required, has the government identified and designated competent personnel who have the authority to implement transition?

MAKING TRANSITION HAPPEN: ASSESS, PLAN AND IMPLEMENT

Questions for Assessing UN Entities' Commitment

Policy

- > The UN is committed to national ownership of mine action programmes as a matter of policy.¹¹ Has the relevant UN entity, at the HQ and country level, announced support to transition in the specific country involved?

Organisation

- > Have all relevant UN entities participated in the transition planning process?

Implementation

- > Do the UN entities that are involved in transition planning and capacity development have the authority to do so and the relevant staff with competencies to carry out the task?
- > If requested, has the UN provided the financial and human resources to ensure success?

Questions for Assessing Donor Commitment

Policy

- > Do the donors to the mine action programme of the country have a written policy supporting national ownership? If not, which donors support transition, and which do not?

Organisation

- > Have donors been involved in the transition planning process?
- > Have donors formally expressed support for the transition process?
- > Have donors created a donor coordination mechanism to collectively support transition?

Implementation

- > If necessary, have donors pledged funding for the transition?
- > If required, have donors indicated a willingness to provide modest funding in the post transition period?

Suggestions for Assessing Commitment

- > Assessing commitment may actually help strengthen it if it is weak.

Commitment is absolutely essential. Do not avoid the issue and hope for the best in the future – the development sector is full of failed projects that assumed commitment would follow a good plan when, in fact, it is most often the case that commitment is required to make a good plan. Establish from the beginning that commitment is the most important component being assessed and share this point of view with all the stakeholders. Discuss it openly and make demands – otherwise the whole transition process may fail and in the process cost time and money and harm morale. A transition policy dialogue by the major stakeholders may actually serve to enhance or create commitment where none existed before.
- > Government commitment is a necessary pre-condition but not always sufficient to guarantee success.

Even with strong government commitment, some governments will require support from outside agencies to proceed with a successful transition. The UN, donors and operators will remain key players. Be sure to involve them from the beginning of the transition planning as you conduct the assessment.
- > Pay particular attention to the pillars of clearance, victim assistance and MRE.

Most transition plans break apart the five pillars of mine action and redistribute them to different government agencies. Victim assistance, for example, is usually put under the Ministry of Health or Social Welfare. Clearance and stockpile destruction often goes to the military or the police for any residual contamination work. Be sure to establish high levels of commitments from the various ministries that will inherit responsibility for the various pillars of mine action.
- > Do not avoid difficult discussions regarding goals that may conflict with transition commitments.

Try to identify any tensions among different priorities that must be resolved if transitions are to be successful. Be sure to ascertain whether clearance obligations, humanitarian concerns or peace consolidation concerns take precedence over transition planning or if key actors perceive them to be in competition with it.

MAKING TRANSITION HAPPEN: ASSESS, PLAN AND IMPLEMENT

- > Weak or non-existent commitment has consequences; do not ignore it.

An assessment of low commitment may mean slowing down the process until sufficient commitment can be created. Or it may mean simply acknowledging lack of commitment and making appropriate plans to proceed with mine action without national ownership.

ASSESSING RESOURCES: HUMAN, FINANCIAL AND INFORMATION MANAGEMENT

Process for Assessing Resources

An assessment process begins with a clearheaded statement of the current programme reality - abolish rhetoric and wishful thinking of what the programme might be. Then follow with a realistic assessment of future requirements. Then move to assess country context and other factors that may advance or inhibit a transition to national ownership. It is vital to have a realistic assessment of what resources – human, financial and information management – are available to support the transition. Identify the stakeholders among government, international agencies, civil society, including INGOs, and donors. Determine what contributions from each are mandatory for a successful transition in a particular context.

Human resources are critical. Competent and motivated personnel are required for the transition to succeed and equally important for mine action activities post-transition.

The importance of a realistic assessment of financial resources required and available to sustain national ownership is critical. The Cartagena Action Plan urged mine/ERW-affected countries to “map the national resources available to meet their obligations and the needs for international cooperation and assistance.”¹²

A word on Information Management: Information Management is not usually considered on the same level as human and financial resources, and, in truth, it is secondary to these first two categories. But it runs a close third place given the importance of accurate record keeping to successful mine action. After a week-long review workshop, one national mine action programme manager proclaimed that he managed what was essentially an “information management agency” – all else was secondary. Yet accurate record keeping and information management remains one of the major challenges for mine action. Often the problem is that information management strategies do not adequately address information requirements. As a result, processes can become unnecessarily complex and beyond the capacity of available staff to

implement. Complexity and sophistication may outrun staffing capacity and management comprehension in a resource poor environment.

Given that resource availability is a precondition for a successful transition, what are the indicators that may be helpful in ascertaining if that precondition is met?

Questions for Assessing Human Resources

- > What staffing level and quality is required in the structures envisioned post-transition? Is it available? If not, what additional training is necessary to ensure successful transition?
- > Is competent international or regional expertise available if outside training or support for capacity development is required?
- > What roles are local and/or international NGOs playing in the current mine action programme? How does their work affect or contribute to the transition? Is the support they are providing a critical component to the success of any of the five mine action pillars?
- > Do programmes implemented by international NGOs contain assets that might be well incorporated into the transition plan? Does asking an INGO with relevant expertise to assume aspects of capacity development make the most financial sense?
- > Is there a national or international NGO with clearance capacity operating in country? If yes, what role does this organisation expect to play post-transition?
- > Is the timeline for training realistic in terms of the human resource requirements for transition?

Questions for Assessing Financial Resources

- > Does the government have the capacity and commitment to provide funding through national budgeting processes?
- > If international support ends once a programme has completed transition, will this cripple mine action? If yes, can modest and long-term donor support be enlisted?
- > Is financial independence an essential element of national ownership? If not, how should national sustainability be qualified?
- > Has an assessment been conducted of 'demand driven' mine action (eg

MAKING TRANSITION HAPPEN: ASSESS, PLAN AND IMPLEMENT

demining services required by and paid for public infrastructure projects) and 'market driven' mine action (eg demining services required and paid for by private investments in mining, oil and gas, industrial estates, etc)?

Questions for Assessing Information Resources

- > Does the information management system adequately address identified information and reporting requirements? If no, is there a realistic plan and resources to improve it?
- > Are the human resources required to maintain the information management system available at a cost the government is willing and capable of paying? If not, what are the alternatives?
- > Are the armed forces and/or the national police to be assigned responsibility for dealing with residual contamination? If yes, what are the implications for information management? Are they willing to share data with civilian authorities? Should Information Management System for Mine Action (IMSMA) be used? If not, what are the consequences and how should they be addressed?
- > If the five pillars of mine action are disaggregated during transition, will each ministry or agency responsible for a pillar be capable of incorporating current mine action data into its own information management system?
- > Outside of ministries or agencies responsible for mine action pillars, should archival data on cleared land be maintained by yet another ministry or agency such as the Department of Cadastral Survey or the Ministry of Public Works?

Suggestions for Assessing Resources

- > Human resources – specific skills and general educational background.
Human capacity can be assessed on two levels – specific skills that can be taught and without which the job cannot be done, and basic education which cannot be taught quickly and without which the general work cannot progress. For the former, targeted and competent training will solve the problem and change the assessment. For the latter, an investment in education may require far more years than are reasonable for a transition plan.

- > Successful transition may not mean total independence from international assistance.

Some programmes exist in countries more than capable of financially sustaining post transition activities at a high level. Other countries might require relatively modest help just to continue to attend international conferences and forums.

- > Information management is vital but do not let the excellent become the enemy of the good.

Keep the data file system only as large and complex as is necessary to manage the problem. Determine minimum reporting requirements (such as State Parties' reporting obligations to the various conventions). If the desired system cannot be maintained by national staff without reliance on international technical support, then revise the system requirements to meet national management capabilities, down to the minimum acceptable limits (beyond which pushing for transition should be questioned).

- > A properly designed and maintained database should:
 - > provide current information on the size and nature of the problem, particularly the extent of contamination and the number of victims requiring assistance;
 - > record activities undertaken to reduce the problem and, subsequently, revise the size of the problem; and
 - > archive and retrieve information, particularly areas of contamination that have been declared free of mines/ERW.

- > Monitoring costs are a necessary investment in information management.

Establish a monitoring system to keep the data updated and provide quality control of the data. Monitoring costs money but it is a necessary investment in information management. Without monitoring, the system will lose credibility and will waste time and money. Donor support often rewards credible reporting, even when such reporting identifies problems, as long as efforts to correct problems are also reported.

ASSESSING GENDER ISSUES

Gender mainstreaming is ‘the process of assessing the implications for women and men of any planned action’. It focuses attention on ensuring that the concerns and experiences of women, girls, boys and men are taken into consideration in the design, implementation and monitoring of programmes. There are two reasons to consider gender in the transition process. First, gender-sensitive planning and implementation of mine action programmes produce better programmes. And second, the country involved may have legal obligations. Gender is a cross-cutting issue that affects all aspects of mine action. But because of its importance and the fact that it is too often overlooked in the rush to produce assessments and plans and to implement those plans, gender is treated here as a stand-alone issue.

Mine Action, Gender and International Law

The 1997 APMBC, and the 1983 Convention on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons Which May be Deemed to be Excessively Injurious or to Have Indiscriminate Effects (CCW) do not contain gender-sensitive provisions. The Cartagena Action Plan (2010-2014) however, explicitly mentions gender on 11 occasions. The 2008 Convention on Cluster Munitions (CCM) explicitly mentions gender issues in its preamble and in Articles 5 and 7, and the Vientiane Action Plan (2010-2014) makes reference to gender issues in seven different action points.

A larger legal framework for gender equality exists, and it has been ratified by most mine-affected countries. This framework includes the principles of non-discrimination and equal enjoyment of political rights that are enshrined, inter alia, in the (1948) Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the (1979) Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW). Although not legally binding, the 1995 Beijing Platform for Action establishes gender mainstreaming as a global strategy for the promotion of gender equality and calls on governments to recognise ‘that women and children are particularly affected by the indiscriminate use of mines’. More recently, in 2008, the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) has recognised that women and girls with disabilities are particularly disadvantaged.

UN Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security emphasises “...the need for all parties to ensure that mine clearance and mine awareness programmes take into account the special needs of women and girls”.

More informally, the processes in designing the UN’s Millennium Development Goals and the International Monetary Fund (IMF)’s Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers both involve gender analysis.

From a programme point of view, the added value of ensuring that women, girls, boys and men enjoy equal access to and participate in mine action programmes as beneficiaries is tangible and has resulted in better programmes that benefit communities as a whole. For example, it has been shown that the engagement of women, as beneficiaries, employees and decision makers, has enhanced female empowerment in societies where women are often not considered participants in the public sphere.

Questions for Assessing Gender Issues

- > What international treaties and/or conventions regarding gender and gender equality are applicable to the country? Is the country a party to any of the following international instruments?
 1. Universal Declaration of Human Rights
 2. The CEDAW
 3. The APMBC and the Cartagena Action Plan
 4. The CRPD
 5. The CCM and the Vientiane Action Plan
- > Is mine action data collected and analysed in a sex and age disaggregated manner when possible?
- > Are gender issues considered in the transition plan? For example: gender-sensitive recruitment and training policies and procedures of the national programme; gender-balanced staff composition; collection, analysis and use of sex and age disaggregated data and gender indicators for programming and tailoring of activities; surveys and priority setting involving women, girls, boys and men.
- > Throughout the transition assessment, planning and implementation phases, have relevant women and men been involved on an equal basis?
- > If the assessment identifies any gender-related problems, address the problems accordingly.

MAKING TRANSITION HAPPEN: ASSESS, PLAN AND IMPLEMENT

Tools for Assessment

1. Annex 4 | Assessment Matrix: Country Context

This matrix provides an instrument that can be used or adapted to highlight possible constraining factors on a transition plan. The matrix utilises public domain indexes in the following areas: Failed States Potential, Foreign Assistance as Percentage of GNP, Education Level, Public Health Indicators, the UN's Human Development Index and, finally, the general level of mine contamination. The matrix is an Excel worksheet whose elements can be assigned differing weights. Changing the weight in the sheet that is available on the web version of this report will automatically change the country score. The matrix in Annex 4 has been populated with data for the nine countries of the case studies. It is interesting to note the correspondence between the weighted country scores and the country's progress in transition to national ownership. This matrix can be used as it is to assess a particular country or modified to better reflect conditions in differing contexts.

2. Annex 5 | Assessment Checklist: Commitment

3. Transition planning can provide a good opportunity to review how effectively gender has been taken into account in the mine action programme to date. "UN Gender Guidelines for Mine Action Programmes", March 2010 revision, provides a useful set of benchmarks to be used in such a review.¹³

ENDNOTES

⁷ In some cases, it may also be warranted to conduct an evaluation of a transition project (eg to document lessons learnt for the benefit of mine action programmes in other countries or other transition initiatives in the same country).

⁸ See Annex 2 Assessment: Country Context for URLs of public sources.

⁹ Capacity4dev.eu is an online knowledge sharing and collaboration platform set-up by The European Commission Directorate General EuropeAid <http://www.capacity4dev.eu.europa.eu/content/faq#cap4dev>.

¹⁰ State Parties to the APMBC: Article 5 obligations, State parties to the CCM: Article 4 obligations and State parties to the CCW Protocol V: Article 3 obligations.

¹¹ Mine Action and Effective Coordination: The UN Interagency Policy, paragraph 16, HTTP://WWW.MINEACTION.ORG/DOWNLOADS/1/MAEC_8_2_6_ per cent20FINAL per cent20PDF.PDF.

¹² Cartagena Action Plan 2010 – 2014: Ending the Suffering Caused by Anti-personnel Mines, Second Review Conference of the States Parties to the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on their Destruction, 11 December 2009; <http://www.mineaction.org/doc.asp?d=1300>.

¹³ The UN Gender Guidelines are available at www.mineaction.org or www.gichd.org.



DRAFTING THE PLAN

PROCESS FOR DRAFTING THE PLAN

Transition is too often treated as a continuing and never-ending process. This is not necessarily unreasonable: any process can be improved and refined and extended far into the future, which may result in continually improving mine action. This guide is written from the point of view that transition is an activity that can be reasonably defined and achieved in a finite period of time if the major stakeholders, led by the national authorities, can reach consensus on the plan.

As stated in the definition section, transition is simply one aspect of mine action and reflects neither the end of mine action nor the end of international cooperation for mine action. It is a transfer of authority and control to the national authority. The degree of authority and control may vary to accommodate different national realities. The trick is to plan a goal that is small enough to be accomplished but big enough to make a difference in the life of the national programme. Transition should not, however, become an end in itself. The end goal should be defined at the national level, taking into consideration context-specific issues.

The transition plan is a brief document that contains three parts:

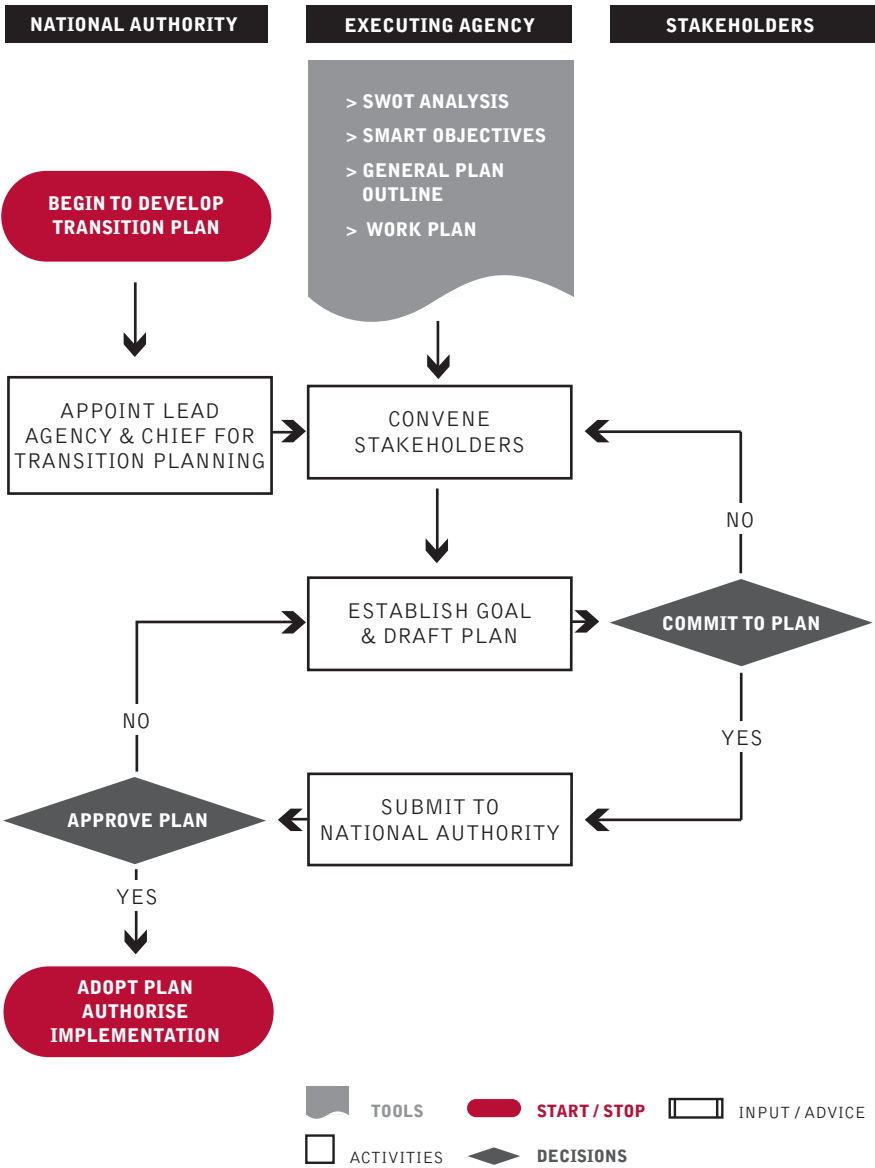
1. A statement summarising the current situation regarding transition.
2. A goal describing the desired end state of a transition process.
3. Objectives with supporting activities that will move the programme from the current situation to the desired transition end state.

If these three elements are properly designed then the only remaining impediment to success is the absence of commitment to implementation on the part of the major stakeholders. Remember that the goal should be the intended end state of the transition process. The objectives, taken together and successfully accomplished, will produce the goal. The activities are the actions required to achieve the objectives. At each level – goal, objective and activity – a person or agency should be named as the responsible party. Do not get overly detailed in stating activities; list major activities that are critical to achieving the objective.

The objectives must be SMART – Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant and Time-bound. Using a SMART approach will provide clarity for the person or agency responsible for achieving the objective while also establishing accountability for accomplishment. See Annex 6 – SMART Table for more information.

DRAFTING THE PLAN

Figure 3 | The Sample plan development process map



DRAFTING THE PLAN

The process map on page 33 captures the main elements of a process for developing a transition plan. The process is initiated by the national authority (upper left corner), implemented by the executing agency, with involvement of the stakeholders (centre and right columns), and finally, adopted by the national authority (lower left corner). If the national authority accepts the draft plan, it is critical that it works with the stakeholders to obtain their commitment to the plan. If this commitment is not forthcoming from a major stakeholder the executing agency may need to review and to revise the plan to ensure greater stakeholder support.

Questions on Developing a Transition Plan

- > Has the government led the process?
- > Is the goal clearly stated and supported by key stakeholders as a precursor to identifying what core functional capabilities are needed to meet it?
- > Have relevant stakeholders determined the core functional capabilities of a long-term mine action programme that need to be transitioned? If yes, how/when are these determined, and by whom?
- > Do national authorities have a clear understanding of the roles other stakeholders can play to support the transition plan? Have those roles been clearly identified in the plan?
- > Have all stakeholders been involved in the planning process?
- > Has the institutional home(s) for mine action been clearly identified in the plan?
- > Is the plan concise with SMART objectives and supporting activities?
- > Does each activity have a timeline and agency/person responsible for ensuring implementation?
- > Is each activity sufficiently resourced (people and funds)?

Suggestions on Developing a Transition Plan

- > Simplicity is the key to good planning.

Keep the plan realistic and simple and focus only on those objectives that are truly essential to achieve the transition goal. Be clear that the plan has a beginning and a specific end date. The end date may shift as experience with the plan dictates but never lose sight of it.

- > Commitment by stakeholders is critical: involve them at all stages.

Make sure that all stakeholders within and outside of the government are involved in the analysis and planning process, at least at the level of attendance at regular reporting and review meetings as the analysis and creation of the plan proceeds. Inclusive involvement in planning by all key actors at each step will ensure ultimate buy-in and enhance the possibility of success. The national authority should appoint an agency and an individual within that agency to lead the process (in most cases this would be the mine action coordination centre), but all stakeholders need to be involved in the drafting of the plan.
- > No person or agency likes surprises – frank communication is often key.

Keep all stakeholders informed and solicit their advice as the process unfolds. ‘No surprises’ should be the rule.
- > The plan is the critical element in transition – ensure adequate support.

Staff the process. Those programmes that have had transition officers whose key role is to make transition happen have done better. Keep clear lines of communication open with all stakeholders.
- > Decide whether to maintain or split the pillars of mine action.

This is a very important issue. Consider it carefully. In the long run, the different pillars may have different funding sources and require different institutional support. For instance, in several countries victim assistance has found its long-term home within the health ministry or veterans and social affairs ministry, while the military has been given responsibility for demining and stockpile destruction. Advocacy is usually assigned to the foreign ministry. The carrying capacities of each of these possible inheritors of a mine action pillar may vary widely. Health Ministries in some countries, for example, are better funded than Ministries of Social Welfare, with implications for how each pillar will be sustained – or not.
- > Use transition to take a fresh look at how gender concerns are or are not incorporated into the country’s mine action programme.

Gender analysis should inform the analysis and subsequent transition planning. Mine action is stronger when gender analysis and considerations infuse all levels of activity. Transition planning is an opportunity to take advantage of gender guidelines now available to make for a more effective and equal programme in the future.

DRAFTING THE PLAN

- > Involve the security services¹⁴ and/or the civil defence early on in the process.

Determine early on who will be responsible to deal with residual contamination, and involve relevant actors as soon as possible in the discussion. Existing national legal frameworks will determine the range of options available for post-transition structures. The role of the security services and/or civil protection must be taken into account early on if expensive and duplicative planning / capacity building is to be avoided. If these actors are to play a key role post-transition, pay close attention to the implications for the data base and its future use.

- > Consider whether mine action expertise can be used to address broader security issues and if so, what are the implications for the transition plan?

If there are ways in which mine action expertise could be repositioned to address such issues, the transition plan should identify the staffing and resources to make this possible. Especially important is a clear statement of where such new endeavours should be housed and what support will be required, both internally and externally, to support the new goals.

- > Commitment is nice; memoranda of understanding are better.

Once the plan is drafted, have all the stakeholders formally endorse it. This is no time for tentative support. As long as the plan is clear and concise there should be no difficulty in getting formal endorsement: if there is, there must be questions concerning commitment, which will need to be re-visited. In addition, seek a public expression of support from the highest level of government official possible. Keep in regular communication with the stakeholders to make sure key stakeholders remain supportive.

Tools for Planning

1. **Annex 7 | SWOT analysis table**

SWOT (Strengths-Weaknesses-Opportunities-Threats) analysis may be the most efficient way to analyse the current situation of a mine action programme as it prepares for transition.

2. **Annex 8 | Sample transition plan**

A sample plan outline is attached as Annex 8. In the electronic version of this guide, supporting MS Excel and MS Project sheets are attached to this annex.

3. **Annex 9 | Transition Activities Matrix**

It may be helpful to develop a matrix of transitional activities as was done in Sudan. See Annex 9 – Transition Activities Matrix. The matrix presented the various pillars and competencies, activities, what elements of the transition plan the activities corresponded to, the individual(s) responsible and deadlines. The matrix was an essential document as it made the transition plan more concrete, clearly presenting the activities which were needed for each area, indicating who was responsible for which activity and by when. It essentially answered the questions: Why, What, Who, When and made it easy to hold the responsible party accountable.

ENDNOTES

¹⁴ In this context, security services are understood to include the military and the police.





IMPLEMENTATION AND MONITORING

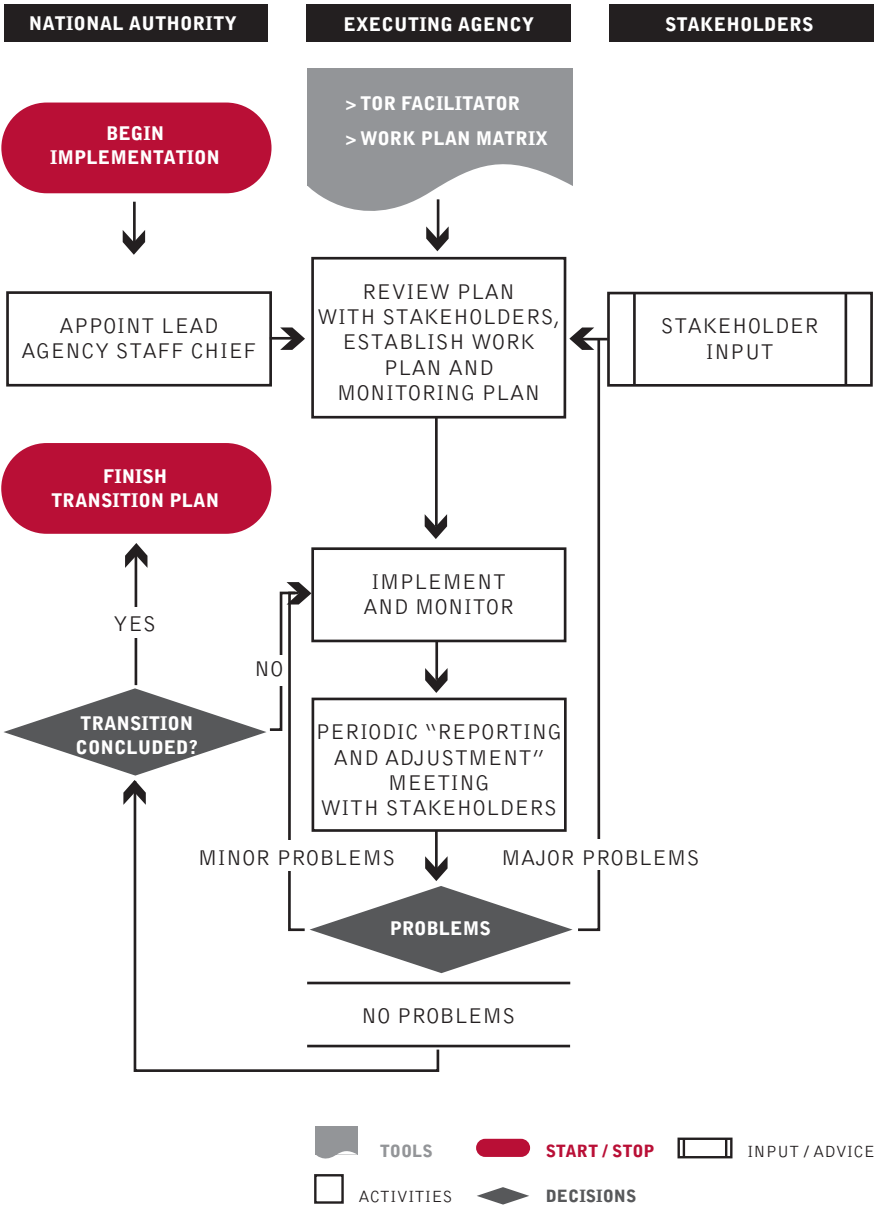
PROCESS FOR IMPLEMENTATION AND MONITORING

With a clear and simple plan, implementation and monitoring should not be a burden on routine mine action activities. It is important for the lead agency to stay in regular touch with persons and/or agencies that have taken on responsibilities for activities or objectives. Regular meetings to report on progress and problems should not take more than several hours a month or every other month.

Figure 4, on page 41, shows that the implementation is begun by the national authority (upper left column), implemented by the executing agency with stakeholder input (centre and right columns) and finally concluded by decision of the national authority (middle of the left column). Minor problems identified during implementation or monitoring are referred to the relevant implementation unit for resolution. Major problems are referred back for review by the executing agency and the shareholders for resolution that may involve revision of the plan. If there are no problems (bottom of middle column) then implementation and monitoring continue until the transition plan has been successfully completed.

IMPLEMENTATION AND MONITORING

Figure 4 | The Sample implementation process map



IMPLEMENTATION AND MONITORING

The key to successful monitoring is a well-written transition plan with clearly stated, realistic objectives and outcomes and key progress indicators for each objective and outcome.

A properly designed plan that assigns specific people and/or agencies to take responsibility for specific activities, and that includes a timeline by which each activity should be accomplished, will make monitoring a simple and straightforward process. The lead agency or person is responsible for monitoring. The purpose of monitoring is to improve performance in pursuit of the plan's goal. If the plan is on target then monitoring will simply register this fact in a very brief report to stakeholders. If problems are identified in the implementation of activities then the problems should be highlighted, investigated and remedial action taken. Usually this does not require complicated consultations.

The principle of subsidiarity or taking action at the lowest possible level should apply for both national authorities and UN personnel. There are only three levels of responsibility in the plan: 1) the goal, 2) each objective and 3) each activity. A person or agency should be identified for each activity. The executing authority is responsible for the objectives. The national authority is, ultimately, responsible for the goal. A monitoring component would establish a reporting period and each person or agency responsible for each activity should report to the level above them on any problems or time delays in completing the activity. The person or agency responsible for the objective would then report, on the basis of all the activity reports associated with that objective, to the person or agency responsible for the plan.

Any required changes in activities, objectives or associated timelines should be discussed with the person or agency directly above and approved by the person or agency responsible for the achievement of the goal. This authority chain has only three links and should not become overly complicated. If serious complications arise, the person or agency responsible for the goal may choose to convene a meeting of stakeholders to discuss the problems and seek advice and support for any necessary change in the plan itself.

Monitoring, when done well and consistently, is a learning process that leads to more efficient implementation and successful outcomes. As such, the monitoring process should involve the stakeholders as partners. A Monitoring Committee (MC) should include all the key stakeholders. The administration of the monitoring regime and periodic evaluation should be undertaken by the executing agency while the actual monitoring and reporting should be done at the level of the implementers.

IMPLEMENTATION AND MONITORING

The executing agency should establish a Monitoring Plan (MP). The MP should review the Transition Plan and identify the Key Performance Indicators (KPI) of the plan. Simple reporting forms on the KPIs can be drafted and shared with the relevant implementers. These forms should focus on the KPIs only. Allow space for comments but keep the actual reporting as simple and focused on KPIs as possible.

The monitoring plan should establish reporting periods for the implementers to report on their part of the Transition Plan. The executing authority will collate and review these reports and share them with the MC for comments. If there are no problems then the monitoring process simply proceeds. If there are minor problems, the executing authority can engage the implementer and mutually determine remedies to get the project back on track. If there are major problems, then the MC may be called to review the MP itself. The executing authority and the implementing partner should prepare an assessment of the problem and recommend solutions. The problem may be with the implementing partner but, equally, it may be with the MP. In either case, a review and appropriate revision of the plan or even a change in implementing partner may be called for.

Questions for Implementation and Monitoring

- > Has a lead agency been identified and made accountable for implementation?
- > Are extra funds and/or personnel made available if required?
- > As required, have terms of reference and organograms been developed in support of the plan?
- > Is there a simple and regular reporting system?
- > Is the lead agency following up on identified problems?
- > Are there regular meetings of all implementers to check on progress?
- > Is a periodic assessment conducted and do lessons learnt lead to a revision of the plan to correct the shortcomings identified?

IMPLEMENTATION AND MONITORING

Suggestions for Implementation and Monitoring

- > Keep reporting meetings short and to the point.

Regular meetings to review progress and resolve problems are critical for smooth progress and maintaining commitment. Poorly conducted meetings will advance neither progress nor commitment. Good facilitation of meetings is a skill that is not always present in otherwise very skilled and senior personnel, and this role should not fall automatically to the senior person present. The senior person of the lead agency or ministry should convene and close the meeting but turn the actual facilitation of the meeting over to the facilitator.

A meeting of stakeholders is a serious investment of time and labour – it should not be wasted by poor facilitation. If there are no problems with the implementation activities called for in the plan, the meeting can be over quickly. If there are problems, the facilitator should focus the group on identifying the issues, determining solutions and assigning responsibilities for the solutions. Produce brief minutes that clearly capture decisions and note the person responsible to take action.

- > Time spent monitoring a vague plan is usually time wasted.

If the transition plan does not have clearly stated activities, outputs and outcomes, monitoring will prove very difficult at best and will waste a lot of time. If the Monitoring Committee reviews the plan and identifies problems in terms of effective monitoring, the Committee should alert the executing authority and request clarification or revision.

- > Engage donors.

Short reports and focused regular meetings are good ways to engage donors. As problems emerge, share them with donors as well as the steps being taken to remedy each problem. If appropriate, ask the donors for advice and help. Make them part of the process – not just receivers of artfully positive (ie false) reports.

- > Write and circulate periodic reports that are brief and honest.

Reporting should be a short and brutally honest exercise. Briefly celebrate progress and then focus on problems encountered over the latest period and steps taken to correct them. No plan is perfect and no execution is flawless. Monitoring is designed to identify problems as quickly as possible, define them clearly and initiate corrective action.





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