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The Survey Action Center

The Survey Action Center (SAC) is an international non-profit organization created in response to the need for defining and quantifying the scope and impact of landmines worldwide. At present, SAC is operating in Afghanistan, Azerbaijan, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Lebanon and Somalia.

by Jennette Townsend, MAIC

Background

SAC serves as the coordinating body for Landmine Impact Surveys (LISs). The Survey Working Group (SWG), consisting of the United Nations Mine Action Service (UNMAS) and the Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining (GICHD), created SAC in response to the need for defining and quantifying the scope and impact of landmines worldwide. The SAC Board of Directors consists of people from the following lead non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in the mine action field:

- Handicap International (France)
- Mine Clearance Planning Agency (Afghanistan)
- Norwegian Peoples Aid (Norway)

Thus far, SAC has completed Impact Surveys in Chad, Mozambique, Cambodia, Thailand and Yemen. The center is conducting new surveys in Afghanistan, Azerbaijan, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Lebanon and Somalia.

Operations Update

The SWG met on May 12th in Geneva for their second meeting of the year. Business included a review of LIS Protocols and procedures and an introduction of the survey evaluation by Scanteam team leader Arne Dirsch. Also in May, Scanteam was awarded the Global Landmine Survey evaluation task. Evaluation began in June, with meetings in Ottawa, Vancouver, New York and Washington. As part of the initial phase of the evaluation, Scanteam conducted interviews in Ottawa, New York and Takoma Park from June 2–9. Next month they will conduct field visits to Yemen, Thailand, Cambodia, Bosnia and Mozambique.

Board Activities

In April, SAC executive director Bob Eaton made a presentation on Information Needs for Planning Post-conflict Reconstruction at the Fafo Institute for Applied International Studies in Oslo, and in May, Eaton was in Geneva for an SWG meeting. Mike Kendellen (SAC director) served on a panel that discussed the global landmine problem and the role of impact surveys in planning mine action programs, held at the American Natural History Museum in New York on April 30th. He was also an observer at the UN Certification Committee meeting for the Cambodia LIS, held in New York in May. Kendellen was in Khartoum and Nairobi from June 12–20 to discuss implementing an LIS in Sudan. The National Mine Action Office (NMAO) in Khartoum facilitated the visit.

Afghanistan

The United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Assistance to Afghanistan

(UNOCHA) has requested that an impact survey be conducted in Afghanistan. Two Advanced Survey Missions (ASMs), funded by the U.S. Department of State (DOS), took place in November 2000 and April 2001. In April, SAC and United Nations Development Program (UNDP)-Kabul signed an agreement to conduct an LIS in Afghanistan with the European Commission (EC) as the donor and the Mine Clearance Planning Agency (MCPA) as the implementing partner for SAC. In May, the team of Alan Macdonald (Senior Technical Advisor), Peter Sugden (Operations Advisor), Robert Abelsen (Geographic/Geospatial Information System and Database Advisor) and Gohar Margaryan (Finance & Administrative Advisor) assembled for discussions of LIS planning and operations. Also in May, an orientation session for the new SAC team was held in Takoma Park, and the team arrived in Kabul to begin office setup, which is now well underway.

Angola

SAC is conducting Angola's first nationwide impact survey. Begona Fontan Pena, a veteran of the Azerbaijan LIS survey, is the acting Program Manager at the SAC Coordination Center in Luanda. Begona came to Takoma Park in May for the Angola LIS finance/administration and program orientation. She arrived in Luanda on May 31st for continued sub-contract negotiations and office setup.

Azerbaijan

In Azerbaijan, all data collection/field work was completed on April 12th; 649 communities were surveyed. With data entry complete, quality control and final report writing is in process with some additional fieldwork being conducted for quality assurance purposes. SAC began work on the project in early September and has worked closely with its local implementing partners, the International Eurasian Press Fund (IEPF) and the Azerbaijan National Agency for Mine Action (ANAMA). The EC funds this survey through the UNDP office in Azerbaijan.

Bosnia-Herzegovina

In Bosnia-Herzegovina, Eritrea and Ethiopia the data collection phase, which began in April, continues. In Bosnia-Herzegovina, 1,676 surveys were completed as of June 27th. Dr. Rune Engeset, SAC Survey Technical Advisor, was in Sarajevo in April to support their GIS/Information Management System for Mine Action (IMSMA) database implementation and customization procedures for the questionnaire and the coding sheet. Bob Eaton also visited Sarajevo to finalize Task Assessment and Planning setup with the Bosnia and Herzegovina Mine Action Center (BHMCA). The survey is funded by the U.S. DOS and by the EC through the International Trust Fund (ITF).

Eritrea & Ethiopia

The United Nations and the government of Eritrea requested that an LIS be conducted in Eritrea. The European Union (EU) and the government of Canada (CIDA) jointly fund the survey. Over 200 surveys were conducted by April 30th, and by the end of May data collection was on-going in all regions of the country with over 700 mine-suspected communities visited by the end of June.

The United Nations also requested that an LIS be conducted in Ethiopia. SAC has sub-contracted the Norwegian Peoples Aid (NPA) to work with the Ethiopian Mine Action Office (EMAO) to execute the LIS. The governments of Norway, the Netherlands, and Germany, the U.S. DOS, and the EU are funding the survey. Pilot testing of the survey instruments began early in the year, and at present, data collection is on-going in all regions of the country with over 577 mine-suspected communities visited as of June 27th.

Somalia

SAC conducted an ASM in March of 2001 and reconfirmed the findings of the UN assessment mission. SAC developed a country plan to survey Somalia. However, due to the uncertain security conditions in the south, east and west of Somalia, the country plan was modified to collect data in northern Somalia (Somaliland) as a first phase. The government of Norway (SIDA), the EC and Finland funded the first phase of this survey. In May, the final report was completed and sent to government officials in Hargeisa for feedback. Government feedback was received in June and SAC is now conducting the final internal review before publication.

**Much of the content of this article was provided by the Survey Action Center. To learn more, visit their*

website at <http://www.sac-na.org>.

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