

INTRODUCTION:

The US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) has funded the survey and clearance of 82 former firing ranges which covers an area of 1200 sq km. ITF has signed a Grant Agreement with the US Department of State for implementation of Quality Assurance and Quality Control of Firing Ranges in Afghanistan with an implementation period initially started on 1st Feb 2015. These firing ranges were used by international forces under the ISAF/NATO mission in Afghanistan but now are abandoned. Clearance of Firing Ranges is carried out by an International Demining Company, Sterling Demining Afghanistan (SDA). External Quality Management of this project is implemented by ITF contracted QM cell under DMAC's supervision.

Firing Range External Quality Management Project:

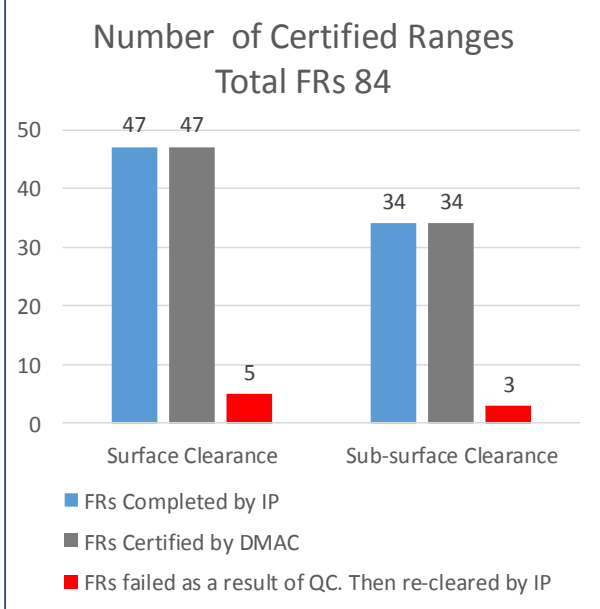
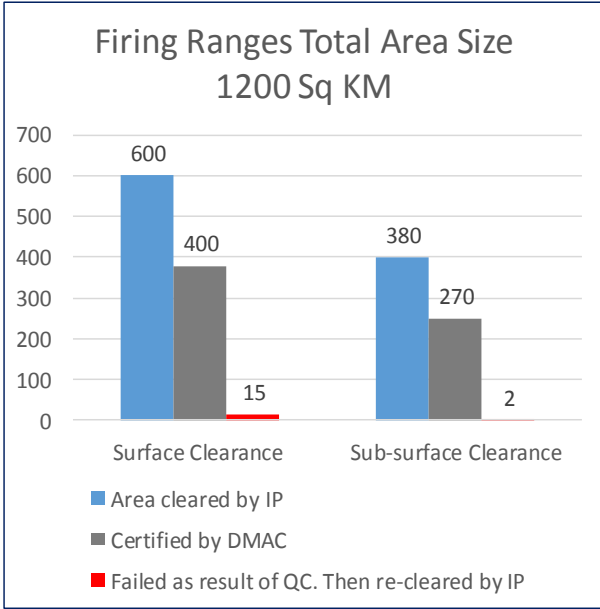
Firing Range External Quality Management project is responsible for Quality Management QM including Quality Assurance (QA) of all SDA survey and clearance activities and 10% Quality Control (QC) of all 82 US Firing Ranges which encompass an area of 1200 sqkm in size.

The FR project ensures, that the IP's clearance operations meet the minimum AMAS requirements with the final aim of confirming that the cleared land is indeed safe and free of hazards and can be used for any socio-economic purposes.

The FR EQM project is composed of one Project Manager (PM), one Project Assistant (PA), 43 Quality Management Inspectors (QMIs) out these 11 QMIs and 1 data processor were recruited on 13 Jan 15 and the remaining 32 QMIs plus PA and one data processor were employed on 13 Oct 2015. The FR project QMIs are stationed in 6 different regions of Afghanistan namely; North- Mazar-e-Sharif, South-Kandahar and Helmand, South East Gardiz and Ghazni, East- Jalal Abad and Center- Kabul HQ, where SDA demining and MRE teams are operational. The project operates under the direction of PM&PA whom report to DMAC director and ITF head of implementation office in Afghanistan.

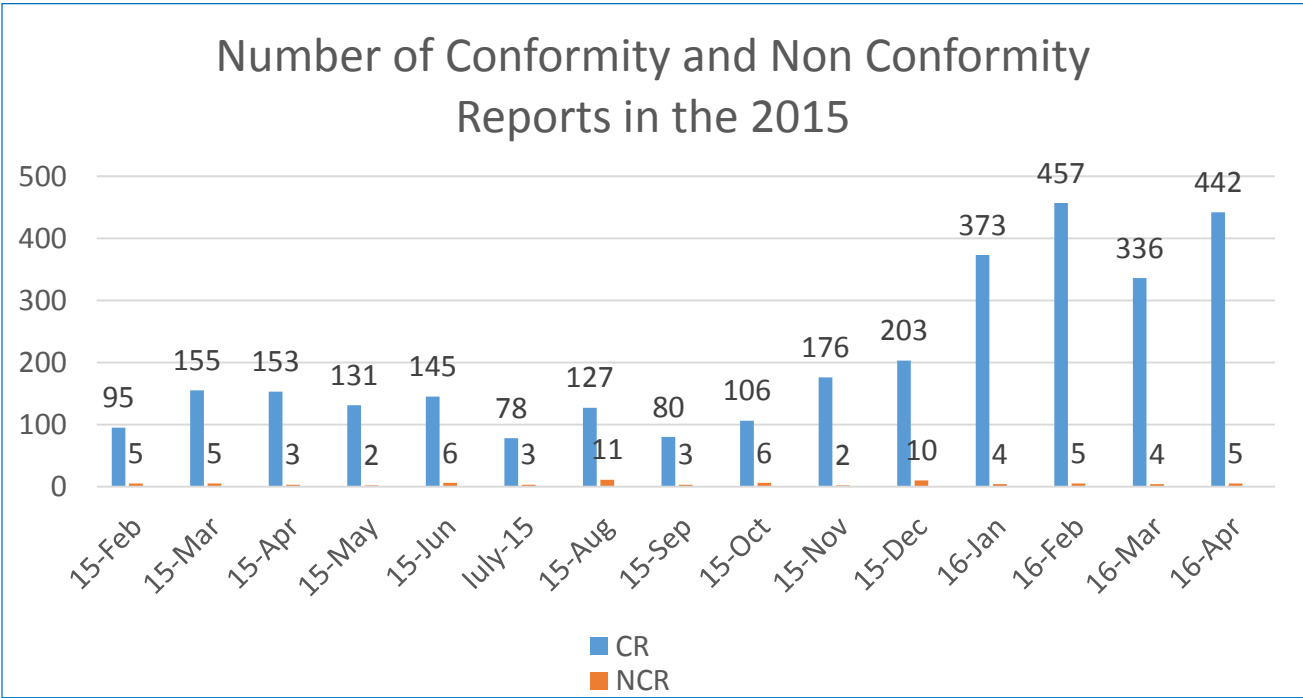
Certification Updates:

The final certification of a firing ranges is issued by DMAC after confirmation by the DMAC's external Quality Management Inspectors (QMIs) that the FR has been quality controlled and is cleared properly. From Feb 2015 till end of April 16 in total DMAC has issued **47 Surface Certificates and 34** subsurface certificates for the cleared FRs. Out of 47 Surface certificates 23 of them were issued by the United Nations Mine Action Coordination Center for Afghanistan (UNMACA). And the remaining 24 Surface and 34 Subsurface by DMAC. It worth mentioning that currently all FR certificates are issued by the Directorate of Mine Action Coordination (DMAC). For more information (See the bellow chart)



Number QM Visits

The FR External Quality Management (EQM) project started its practical field operations on 1 Feb 2015 and from then till end of April 16, the DMAC QMIs have totally conducted more than **3128** external quality management visits out of which **3057** visits resulted in to conformity and **71** visits led to Non Conformity. For more information (See the bellow chart)



Outcome of QA/QC Visits:

Following each QA/QC visit, SDA DT personnel are provided with such constructive and useful advices and information which help them to annihilate and or minimize human and system errors inherited in the procedures. During 2015 DMAC/ITF QMIs played a crucial role in improving and standardizing SDA's clearance procedures. Given the Non Conformity Reports (NCRs) by the DMAC/IF QMIs, SDA had to revise its FR Survey/clearance procedure- Systematic Investigation Approach (SIA) SOP. Amendment of SIA was recommended following 50 NCRs which were issued to SDA as a result discovery of missed UXOs in the areas released through SIA. Each EQM visit have had its undeniable positive effect on the SDA's clearance approaches and have greatly contributed to the improvement of SDA's clearance/survey procedures. The constant monitoring of SDA mine clearance procedures by the DMAC/ITF QMIs have pushed SDA to stick to the AMAS and its SOP directives, resulted in to standardization of SDA mine clearance efforts.

The External Quality Management (EQM) visits conducted by the DMAC/ITF QMIs on the SDA DTs at different FRs have considerably developed SDA's demining personal safety and living conditions in the field and at the base comps. Following a QA visit form a SDA's base comp in Mazar-e-Sharif city which reflected the poor health and hygiene condition of that base comp, SDA had to change it base comp and rented a new house which is much better than its previous one. The EQM visit plays a significant role in standardizing of all aspect of Sterling Deming Afghanistan.

Likewise, the external monitoring being conducted by DMAC QMIs have paved a suitable ground for continual improvement of SDA's clearance and survey procedures. Each issued NCR paves the ground for improvement and correction. As a result of EQM visits, SDA demining personal are given the impetus to observe all demining standards while working in the field. The constant QA/QC visits by the QMIs have increased SDA's demining personals knowledge and expertise on the proper management of mine action operations due to the fact that their planning, coordination, communication and documents are subject to external QA. In order to minimize receiving NCR from the DMAC/ITF QMIs, SDA's command group and managers tries to stick to the Afghanistan Mine Action Standards (AMAS). The external quality assurance and quality control (QA/QC) visits carried out by the QMIs of DMAC/ITF have been pivot behind SDA's improvement of its mine/UXO clearance procedures and as well as personal's experiences- they are now more diligent professional and disciplined.

Similarly, the continues monitoring of SDA demining personnel by the DMAC QMIs led to issuance of 55 Non-Conformity Reports to SDA where they have not cleared the areas in line with the AMAS directions. Most of the NCRs were issued to during external monitoring where the DMAC QMIs would found missed UXOs in the cleared areas. Issuance of these NCRs have compelled SDA to increase its internal QC and verification which this have led to lowering the number of NCRs in the first quarter of 201 compared to the four quarters of 2015.