



MINE ACTION PROGRAMME OF AFGHANISTAN (MAPA) NEWSLETTER: DECEMBER 2012



MINE ACTION COORDINATION CENTER OF AFGHANISTAN (MACCA) EXPERTS PROVIDE TECHNICAL ADVICE TO TMAC

On 5th of November 2012 a delegation from the Mine Action Coordination Center of Afghanistan (MACCA) was led by Dr. Aimal, the MACCA Chief of quality and management visited Tajikistan Mine Action Center (TMAC).

The mentioned delegation was composed of three people from different departments of Mine Action Coordination Center of Afghanistan (MACCA) and one person from Department of Mine Clearance (DMC) and provided some helpful and useful technical advises for further improvements of the TMAC activities in the field of Mine Action.

This cross border initiative of exchange visits of Mine Action experts was of great benefits for both countries in terms of sharing ideas for further improvement and adopting best practices applied in Mine Action programmes.

The aim of this mission was to review Tajikistan National Mine Action Standards (NMAS), review TMACC current mine action processes, conduct field visits and strengthen the relationship between these two neighbors in the future for further enhancement of cross border cooperation and coordination.



Above: Afghan Delegation with colleagues from TMAC

This visit was conducted within a pre-coordination and based on request from Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) under a system of initiative for coordination and co-operation mechanism between States in Central Asia and Afghanistan Mine Action Programme which started in 2009 and the Government of Afghanistan signed a support letter to this initiative.

Therefore, this was an excellent achievement both for MAPA and MACCA through UNMAS support.

At the end of this one weeklong visit there were some recommendations for further improvement of Tajikistan Mine Action Programme and its standards. A standard review board for the management and maintenance of TMAS is recommended which will help TMAC to maintain their standards up to date and address current requirements of mine action programme in Tajikistan.

It is also recommended to consult GICHD and Government of Tajikistan's related entities with regard to TMAS. The MACCA will be happy to support TMAC in reviewing TMAS and provide further recommendations for improvement.

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MINE ACTION SUPPORTS ACCESS TO EDUCATION IN AFGHANISTAN

Clearance of landmine and other explosives has many transformative effects in communities. One of the facilities which has been brought a light to the lives of Afghans, specially children and youth is the educational facilities. One example of this is how it has enabled access to education in Afghanistan.

Where there were once minefields, now stand modern buildings for basic, secondary and higher education.

The village of Gul Ghundi-Parwan was contaminated with landmines and explosives. Because of the minefields, all girls and boys used to go to a school which was very far from them.

“My brothers and me had to walk long distances to school: “I was in 2nd grade at the time, I remember that once my father said ‘don’t go to school anymore, because you are a child and I don’t want you to walk this long distance and go to school’”said Masood 12 year old Masood.

In 1387, MAPA implementing partner HALO TRUST cleared the area from mines and other explosive remnants of war.

As soon as the clearance was finished, the Estiqlal High School was built there and now for almost 3 years the children of Gul Ghundi-Parwan don’t need to walk the long distances to school: a relief to them and their families.

Anisa Ahadi, Principle of Esteqlal High School in Parch e Shash area of Parwan province said: “This area was a huge desert full of mines. No one could use this area and families were worried about their children and men who would sometimes walk cross this area.”

“Due to the hard work of deminers, the area was cleared of mines and other explosives and the government was able to build this school three years ago.” Anisa added.

1,014 male and female students attend this school and parents are not worried about their children being injured or killed by landmines or other explosives.

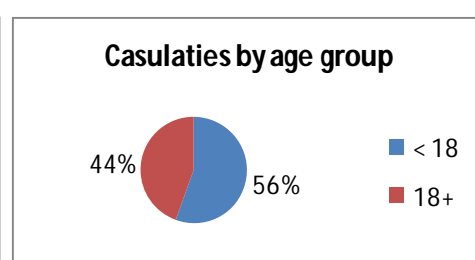
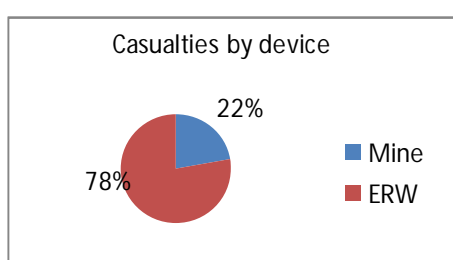
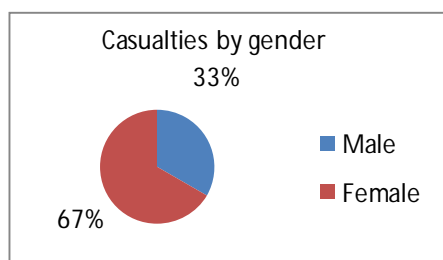
Qari Abdul Samad, head of Maidan Wardak Teacher Training Faculty said: “When we were trying to start the building here, we noticed there were some mines and explosives in the area. We were sure that would create a big problem for us, therefore contacted mine action to clear the area.”

The area was cleared by Mine Action within one and a half months and was handed over to the government for their use.

Now a building for Teacher Training Faculty which will have the capacity of 600 students in one time along with the hostel for both male and female students of Wardak province is being built. The plan is for the faculty to open in 1392.

CASUALTIES IN DECEMBER 2012

In **December 2012**, there were 9 casualties due to Mine/ERW recorded in Afghanistan (data as of January 2013).



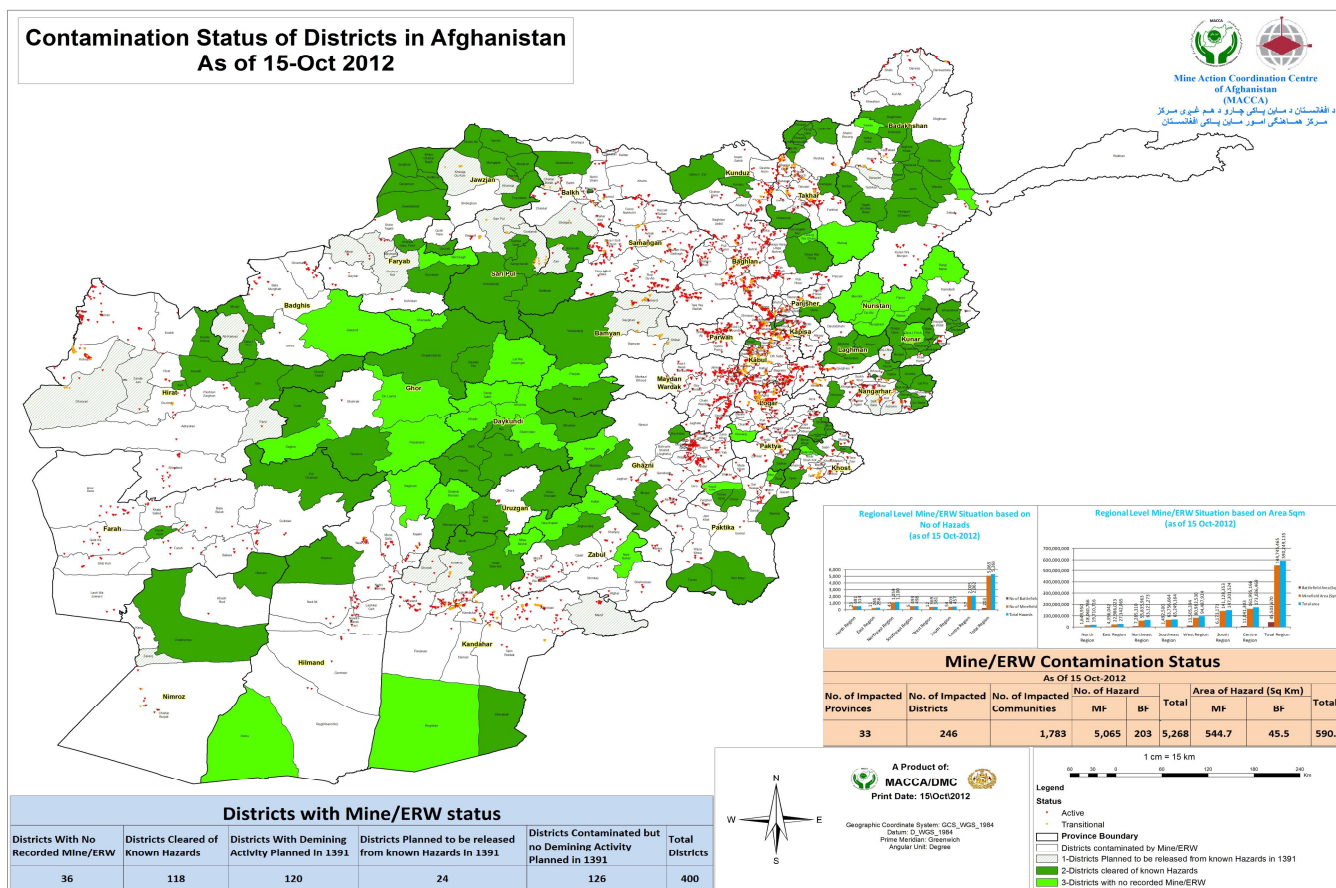
MINE ACTION BENCHMARKS IN AFGHANISTAN

Ottawa Convention:

As part of its obligations under the Ottawa Convention, Afghanistan aimed to clear all emplaced anti-personnel (AP) mines by 2013; destroy all known AP mine stockpiles by 2007; provide mine risk education and assist mine survivors. To note, the Ottawa Convention is about the removal of AP mines, and not of anti-tank (AT) mines or ERW. However it is equally important to ensure that the other hazards are not forgotten whilst the focus is on meeting the Ottawa Convention obligations. In March 2012, the Government of Afghanistan applied for 10-year extension of its deadline to clear all AP mines by 2023. All AP mine stockpiles have already been destroyed.

BENCHMARK TABLE - DECEMBER 2012

	Baseline		New Hazard		Hazard Processed		Progress		Remaining Hazard	
	Hazards	Area	Hazards	Area	Hazards	Area	% of Hazards	% of Area	Hazards	Area
(AP,AT ,ERW mixed)	9,210	722,451,850	74	349,492-	5,668	451,566,120	61.54	62.50	3,542	270,885,730
AT + ERW	5,060	638,301,854	23	3,638,442	3,769	376,533,056	74.49	58.99	1,291	261,768,798
Total	14,270	1,360,753,704	97	3,288,950	9,437	828,099,176	66.13	60.86	4,833	532,654,528



MINE ACTION ACHIEVEMENTS IN YEAR 1391 SO FAR (DECEMBER 2012)

- * 22,144 AP mines, 1,863 AT mines, and 767,351 ERW destroyed.
- * 264 communities cleared of mines and ERW.
- * 221,672 women and girls and 246,080 men and boys received MRE throughout the country.

