



MINE ACTION PROGRAMME OF AFGHANISTAN (MAPA)

NEWSLETTER: JANUARY 2015

"HAPPY NEW YEAR 2015"



An Estimated One Million Lives Changed, Thanks to Mine Action in Afghanistan

Three decades of war in Afghanistan have taken their toll on the country's political and economic systems, on the social fabric of communities and the educational opportunities available for its youth. Even where the guns have fallen silent, there remains the threat of explosive remnants of war (ERW) littered across the country, destroying lives and livelihoods, the natural environment and creating widespread human fear and suffering. Records show that mines and ERW have killed or injured almost 24,000 people since 1989. Given the absence of reliable data during certain periods, the actual number is likely to be much higher.

Since 1989, the Mine Action Programme of Afghanistan (MAPA), with the support of the United Nations, has been working to relieve the threat of both landmines and ERW. War did not stop MAPA; the work of the Afghans in its employ has continued uninterrupted for the last 26 years. Consider for a moment what an Afghanistan without this programme would look like today.

Throughout several eras of uncertainty in Afghanistan, the programme has succeeded in clearing over 524,000 anti-personnel mines, 30,000 anti-tank mines, and almost 32,500 items of ERW. 2,585 square kilometres of land, an area almost 30 times the size of Manhattan (almost 10 times the size of the capital Kabul), were contaminated originally, endangering both lives and livelihoods across the country. Given what we know about the casualties caused by such devices, we can estimate that their removal has prevented the deaths or injury of more than one million people.

In addition to the threat that mines and ERW pose to life and limb, they also have a psychological impact on those living in affected communities. As the Director of MACCA, Mr Sediq Rashid, said in his 2014 TEDx presentation in Kabul, "imagine you are working in your garden and you find a landmine or item of unexploded ordnance, do you think you would continue working there?" If a mine or item of ERW is found, it is likely that there are more close by. Stepping on a mine or ERW is a very real fear for people living in impacted communities. Whether or not the land is contaminated, the fear of contamination alone often leads to land and water sources not being used. This is why the programme endeavours to publicise the fact that land has been released as widely as possible, for example, through official handover ceremonies with local authorities and communities.



MAPA is supported by the following donors to the UN Voluntary Trust Fund for Assistance in Mine Action administrated by UNMAS:

Australia, Austria, Canada, Denmark, Finland, Italy, Japan, South Korea, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Netherlands, and Saudi Arabia.

MAPA is also supported by the following bilateral donors:

ARR Japan, Belgium, DDG Core Fund, Denmark, Finland, Germany, Ireland, Japan, Netherlands, Norway, Norwegian Red Cross, PATRIP, Poland, Sweden, UNHCR, UK, UNOCHA, and US DOS.

In both rural and urban communities, mines and ERW have directly impacted the economy, including the health and educational opportunities available to Afghans. One example is Kabul University, which was heavily contaminated during the civil war of the 1990s. MAPA succeeded in clearing the University, and in doing so found over 40 mines and 1,400 items of ERW on the campus. In the intervening 15 years, an estimated 33,000 students have graduated from Kabul University alone, something which would not have been possible were it not for mine action.

MAPA's activities have not been limited to the survey and clearance of contamination, however. Many MAPA partners are actively working to provide services to survivors of mines and ERW. More than 348,000 people have received such assistance to date, ranging from physical rehabilitation and orthopaedics to socio-economic reintegration and psychosocial support. MAPA partners also advocate on behalf of persons with disabilities in Afghanistan and abroad.

MAPA also works to raise awareness of the risks associated with mines and ERW. Until the country is cleared of all mines and ERW, risk education is essential to prevent further casualties. So far, over 22 million men, women and children have received formal risk education and are now equipped with the knowledge to prevent .

Since 2001, many development projects have been implemented; new roads have been built and old ones repaired; new schools and universities have been constructed; towns and cities have expanded. We often forget that all of these improvements would not have been possible were it not for the hard work of MAPA and the sacrifices of the men and women of mine action, who lost their lives or acquired an injury in the line of the duty.

Despite the clearance of 2,080 square kilometres since 1989, which amounts to 80% of the recorded contamination, the remaining 505 square kilometres make Afghanistan one of the most heavily contaminated countries in the world and the legacy of mines and ERW endures. Today, the ongoing armed conflict creates new contamination on a daily basis and mines and ERW continue to cause 38 casualties on average every month, albeit reduced from a peak of 16 per day 2001.

MAPA remains as committed as ever to its 2023 deadline to clear the country of all mines and ERW. It has the technical capacity required to do so; after 26 years, MAPA has the

world's most experienced mine action staff, the best mine action information management system, and first-rate quality assurance procedures. All it needs now is the sustained financial support of the international community and the Afghan Government to meet this obligation.

MACCA Conducts Quality Management System Training for MAPA

The Mine Action Coordination Centre of Afghanistan (MACCA) is not only a coordination body. In addition to its functions such as advocacy, information management, planning and priority setting, resource mobilisation, one of MACCA's key roles is ensuring the quality of mine action services. MACCA works hard to make sure high quality mine action services are delivered to communities and that all the Mine Action Programme of Afghanistan (MAPA) implementing partners (IPs) have established internal quality management systems (QMS) capable of ensuring the quality of their services in the field. To this end, MACCA's Quality Management Department organised a specific training on QMS for its partners' QM staff from 19 to 22 January 2015.

A review of the MAPA's quality management systems identified the need for QMS Training for the IPs' quality management staff. Together with the quality managers in partner organisations, the QM Department established a MAPA QM team, which convened regular meetings on issues and problems identified. MAPA QM team subsequently developed a QMS training package to be used to train MAPA QM staff and improve their knowledge of QM processes.

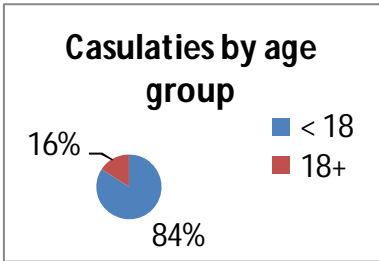
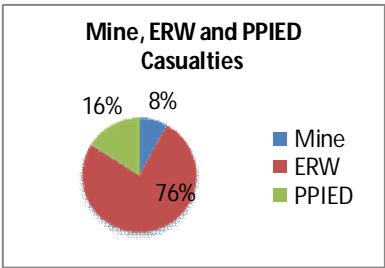
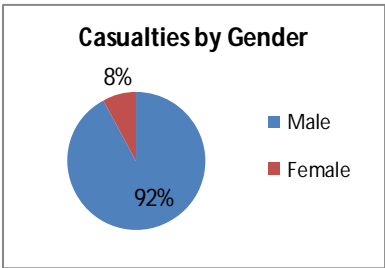
QM staff from AREA, ATC, DAFA, DDG, HALO Trust, MCPA, MDC and OMAR attended the training, which was very well received by the participants and resulted in some important decisions with regard to further training, including the linkages between QM and information management. All MAPA QM staff are to receive training in IMSMA, while QM manag-



Quality Management System Training for MAPA

CASUALTIES DURING JANUARY 2015

During January, 25 civilian casualties due to mines, Explosive Remnants of War (ERW) and PPIEDs were recorded in Afghanistan.



ers should be trained in the new Mine Action Intelligence Tool (MINT) in order for them to be able to analyse their processes independently and for continual improvement. In addition, the training materials will be translated by the partner organisations and used to continually train QM staff. A second training course will be held to cross train operations staff and QM staff in QM aspects and also land release in partner organisations on the quality management aspects of mine action.

The newly established MAPA QM team will continue to meet regularly. All organisations will identify areas of focus based on last year's issues and conduct reviews to overcome any problems. Following on from the theme of the training, these review meetings will focus on finding the root causes for demining incidents or accidents rather than focusing on the symptoms of the problem.



QMS Workshop participants working on QMS Plan

MAPA Focal Points for Gender Mainstreaming Strategy Meeting

The Gender Mainstreaming Strategy of the Mine Action Program of Afghanistan (MAPA) 2014 – 2016 (henceforth referred to as “the strategy”) was developed, with the assistance of the Gender and Mine Action Program (GMAP) through a grant funded by UNMAS, as well as a financial contribution from the Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining (GICHD).

The development of the strategy coincides with the end of the ‘Mine Action Program for Afghanistan Mine Action Strategic Guideline 2008-2013’, which clearly states its intention to promote gender mainstreaming throughout all the activities of the program. The strategy presents the common objectives that will guide the work of all stakeholders in the MAPA over the next three years to ensure that all those affected by landmines and explosive remnants of war (ERW) enjoy equal access to age- and gender-sensitive assistance and services, direct and indirect victims are fully integrated into society, and where the mine action programme contributes to the adoption of safer behaviours, and to the creation of an environment conducive to development. The strategy underlines the MAPA's commitment to meaningfully mainstream gender in

all aspects of its activities, to ensure the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of gender-sensitive mine action projects that are consistent with the specific needs, priorities and capabilities of women, girls, boys and men in mine/ERW affected communities throughout Afghanistan. The strategy reaffirms the importance of effective partnerships with beneficiary communities and emphasizes the imperative for the MAPA to collectively increase the impact of its mine action work on all stakeholders through the delivery of sex and age appropriate activities and services.

This was the fourth meeting of the MAPA Gender Mainstreaming Focal Points and aimed at finalizing the IPs objectives and responsibilities under the strategy and to ensure that their action plans are feasible in the given time frame.

Sixteen Gender Focal Points from 13 Implementing Partner Organizations (AABRAR, AAR-Japan, ALSO, ARCS, DAFA, DDG, HALO, HI, KOO, MCPA, OMAR and SDA), other stakeholders such as DMC and MoPH participated in the meeting. The exercise indicated that the gender focal points are well aware of their responsibilities under this strategy and of what is required to implement the action plans in their organizations.

MACCA provided advice on the improvement of the action plans presented and the use of SMART indicators for each of the objectives.

Participants also discussed possible activities to celebrate International Women's Day on 8th March 2015. This is an opportunity to acknowledge the contributions of women to the programme and to highlight the programme's commitment to including gender issues in its planning and prioritization processes.



MAPA Gender Mainstreaming Workshop

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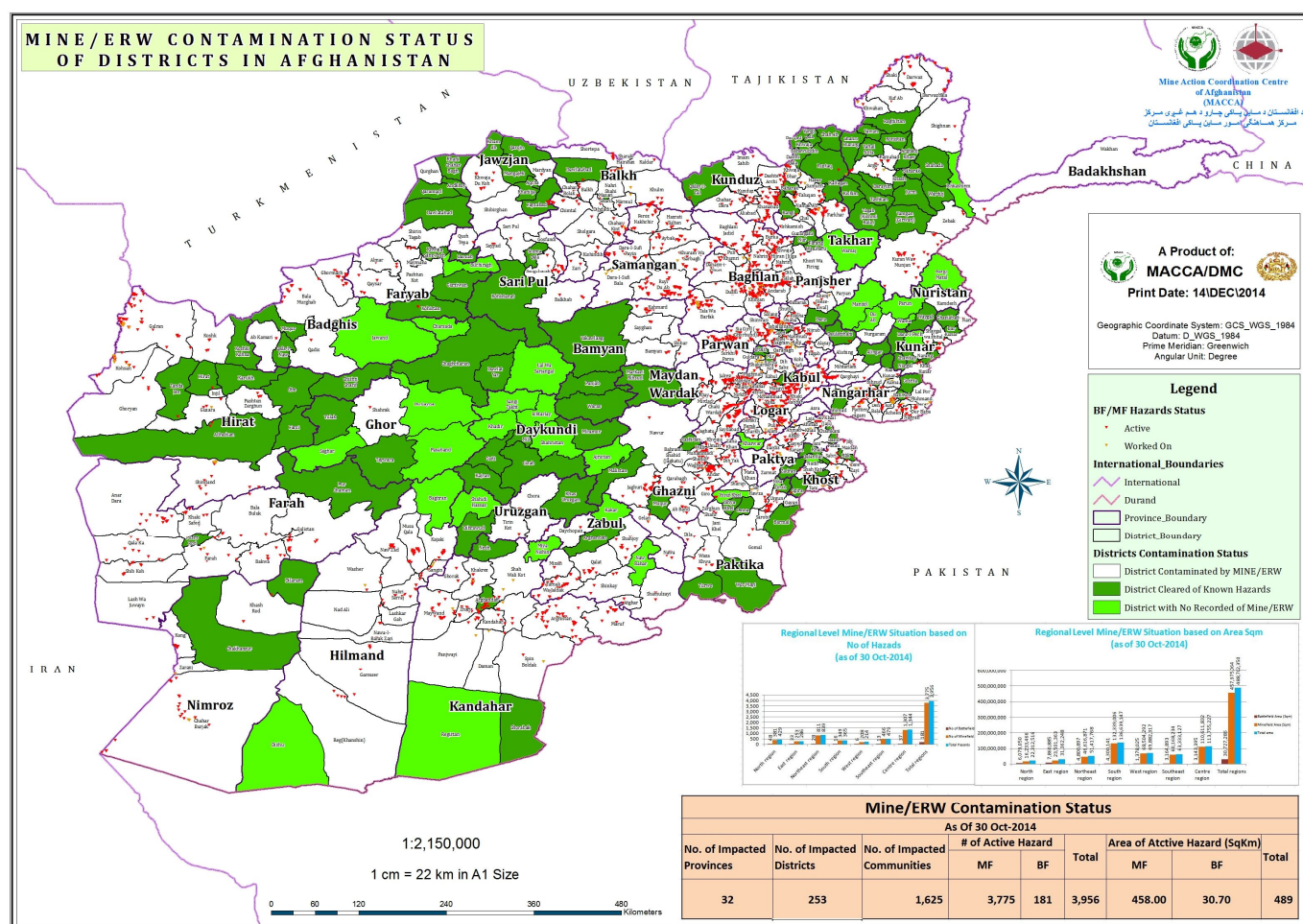


MINE ACTION BENCHMARKS IN AFGHANISTAN

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 other hazards are not forgotten whilst the focus is on meeting the Ottawa Convention's obligations. In March 2012, the Afghan Government submitted a request for a ten-year extension of the deadline to remove all AP mines by 2023. All AP mine stockpiles have already been destroyed. This request was assessed by 10 members of secretariat at the end of November 2012, where all parties accepted the Afghanistan's request. The current baseline and progress is shown in the benchmark table below. In this table "Hazards" represents number of hazardous areas and "Area" represents the area of hazards in square kilometers.

Hazard type	Baseline April 2013		Previously unreported hazards, up to end of January 2015		Resurvey results up to end of January 2015	Current target as of end of January 2015		Hazards processed from April 2013 to end of January 2015		Remaining hazards at the end of January 2015	
	Hazards	Area	Hazards	Area		Hazards	Area	Hazards	Area	Hazards	Area
	a	b	c	d	e	f (a+c)	g (b+d+e)	h	i	j	k
AP + (AP,AT,ERW mixed)	3,439	266.4	865	44.4	-1.0	4,304	309.8	1,509	75.7	2,795	234.1
AT + ERW	1,248	252.1	460	84.8	-13.2	1,708	323.7	549	66.9	1,159	256.8
BF	179	33.5	184	23.7	0.6	363	57.8	113	20.3	250	37.5
Total	4,866	551.9	1,509	152.9	-13.6	6,375	691.3	2,171	162.9	4,204	528.3



MINE ACTION ACHIEVEMENTS IN 1393 SO FAR

- * 10,722 anti-personnel mines, 413 anti-tank mines, and 199,303 ERW destroyed.
- * 136 communities cleared of known mines and ERW.
- * 240,972 women and girls, and 346,220 men and boys received Mine/ERW risk education throughout the country.
- * 23181 people received victim assistance and disability activities including Disability awareness & advocacy, Physical Rehabilitation and socio-economical reintegration.

