



**UNMAS**



SAMUEL HALL.



# Mine Action in Afghanistan: A Success Story in Danger

An Evaluation of UNMAS in Afghanistan (2008-2014)

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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

**UNMAS and the Mine Action Programme of Afghanistan (MAPA) are in a paradoxical situation. Successful and increasingly efficient over the past six years, the MAPA is now in a delicate position to negotiate the years to come, as it struggles to secure the yearly funding it needs to allow Afghanistan to fulfil its treaty obligations.**

Few programmes can claim success in Afghanistan. The MAPA can. Few programmes can claim having an unquestionable humanitarian and development impact. The MAPA can. Few programmes can claim to be built on up-to-date data and robust analysis. The MAPA can. Few organisations can claim to have built technical and management capacities in a sustainable manner. UNMAS can.

The capacities developed by the organisation over the years, especially over the past six years at the Mine Action Coordination Centre Afghanistan (MACCA), make it a rather unique organisation in the Afghan humanitarian landscape that has been characterised by a fledging government, corruption, and insecurity, which have made it a particularly challenging environment in which to operate.

**Assessing the MAPA against the OECD-DAC evaluation criteria highlights the strong performance of the programme under UNMAS' guidance:**

## RELEVANCE

- With an average of 39 victims of mines and ERW per month and still approximately 4,300 hazards to clear, more than 1,630 affected communities and an estimated 2.7% prevalence rate of mine survivors in the population, Afghanistan remains the country the most affected by mines and ERW in the world. Mine action in the country is a humanitarian necessity and utterly relevant.
- UNMAS and MACCA have kept the MAPA relevant over the past six years by adjusting it to the changing priorities on the ground. Through a tight programming and prioritisation system, the programme is able to absorb adequately the socio-economic evolutions and translate them rapidly into concrete measures, although groups at particularly high risks – young boys and nomadic populations for example – could be better integrated in the programme.
- The objective of increasing focus on victim assistance required by the last global strategy is slow to be translated into practical measures by the MAPA. This is partly due to the fact that no clear outcomes, priority sectors of intervention and milestones have been defined for the Afghan context, something that MACCA is currently addressing through an in-depth situational analysis.

## EFFICIENCY

- The MAPA resources are used more efficiently in 2014 than in 2008, with a reduction of coordination costs through a down-sizing of MACCA, an increased productivity linked to technological progress, the introduction of competitive bidding between IPs, and a more precise knowledge of the state of the problem on the ground.
- The impact of the series of reforms in the functioning of MACCA and of the MAPA as a whole is visible in the decrease of the price of demining per square metre and of the budget allocated to coordination. Constant training and capacity-building of staff also improved the efficiency of the MAPA, especially as MACCA reached a remarkable level of technical expertise and coordination capacity.
- In the absence of stable, multi-year funding, the efforts that MAPA stakeholders have to put on securing funding throughout the year have an opportunity cost for the programme and divert resources from implementation.

## EFFECTIVENESS

### Did UNMAS achieve overall programme objectives?

- Due to the constant re-assessment of baseline data on contamination throughout the period, the MAPA had to revise its objectives as the targets laid down in the Ottawa treaty or Afghan Compact were not realistic.
- The absence of clear yearly targets until 2014 make it difficult to assess the achievements of the programme against targets and in turn to communicate clearly on this with donors. Since the extension request was accepted, the MAPA has been able to reach the yearly targets it had planned for in the 10-year work plan.
- Three main sets of objectives have yet to be achieved: a) national ownership on mine action; b) gender mainstreaming; c) increased focus on and impact of victim assistance.

### Were there challenges in doing so?

- A difficult operational environment, insecurity and limited access to certain areas decrease the capacities of the programme to a) survey certain areas to confirm the state of contamination; b) send teams to conduct demining or Mine Risk Education (MRE) activities. In some regions, that may make the 2023 deadline difficult to meet. UNMAS and MACCA pushed for the development of community-based activities over the period, an effective way of addressing this problem.
- The lack of funding in recent years has also impacted MAPA's ability to reach its objectives, as some teams could not be mobilised or projects funded. Activities considered less central, such as the VA or gender mainstreaming, usually suffer first from decreased funding.

## IMPACT

### What is the impact of UNMAS' activities at the individual, community and national levels?

- UNMAS has a strong humanitarian impact. The direct impact of mine action, particularly demining and MRE, under UNMAS and MACCA's leadership, over the past six years is tangible:
  - 451 square kilometres were either cleared or cancelled between 2008 and 2013
  - 9,242 hazards were cleared between 2008 and 2013
  - The number of civilian casualties dropped from 792 in 2008 to 484 in 2013
- The impact of VA is still limited. UNMAS did have an impact on the response of governmental entities to the question of survivors, through a constant technical support to line ministries and an increased awareness of stakeholders. Yet, the impact on availability of services for victims remains limited at this stage.
- The indirect and development impacts of the programme are neither properly assessed and quantified nor integrated in a real donor and advocacy strategy. Yet, these impacts are certain and include: protection of IDPs, increased productive opportunities for communities, removal of blockages for infrastructures, decreased costs linked to victim assistance.
- The environmental impact of demining remains a question mark for MACCA, as no particular benchmarks or strategies are in place in the country to assess it.

## SUSTAINABILITY

### Is the MAPA sustainable in its current architecture in post-2014 Afghanistan?

- Two main challenges hinder the sustainability of the programme supported by UNMAS:

- A decrease in funding that seriously endangers the programme’s ability to operate;
- The unclear delineation of responsibilities with national actors, lack of interest of the Afghan government in mine action and the absence of legislation to frame mine action in the country.
- At this stage, the conditions are not gathered to reduce the importance of MACCA, as it would threaten – not increase – the sustainability of the programme. Yet, advocacy efforts are necessary to raise the importance of mine action on the agenda of the new administration.

In spite of these achievements and overall good performance of the MAPA under UNMAS’ guidance, challenges rise ahead of mine action in the country. A funding crunch and an uncertain legal status weaken the sustainability of the programme as a whole and are likely to impact its ability to deliver a mine-free country in 2023. To a large extent, this delicate situation is linked to factors that are not in the hands of UNMAS and MACCA.

**Yet, fundamentally, the MAPA’s delicate situation also comes from the difficulty for UNMAS to clearly articulate the position of the MAPA on the humanitarian-development continuum. This means missed opportunities for funding. The programme remains difficult to understand and relatively opaque to outsiders, and its mandate is unclear. On the one hand, UNMAS is struggling to prove that mine action is still a humanitarian necessity in Afghanistan. Yet, the MAPA “saves lives and reduces suffering” – as per OCHA’s definition of humanitarian assistance – in a country that is still at the top of the list in terms of scope of contamination and number of civilian casualties per year<sup>1</sup>. On the other hand, UNMAS and MACCA have not provided evidence of the programme’s impact on the development of communities and of the country as a whole, given that the focus has always been more humanitarian. Demining is still a condition for any development programme to take place and demining frees up land in a country that lacks it. The problem here is strategic: by not embracing this double mandate, the organisation is competing ineffectively against other priorities and is losing donors’ attention. If properly articulated, this dilemma could be very fruitful for the organisation, which could play a strong role on both fronts.**

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<sup>1</sup> According to the Landmine Monitor, in 2012 with 766 victims for example, Afghanistan was still the country with the highest number of casualties, far above Columbia. See [http://www.themonitor.org/index.php/publications/display?url=lm/2013/sub/Casualties\\_and\\_Victim\\_Assistance.html](http://www.themonitor.org/index.php/publications/display?url=lm/2013/sub/Casualties_and_Victim_Assistance.html)

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# ACRONYMS

**AABRAR** – Afghan Amputee Bicyclists for Rehabilitation And Recreation  
**ALIS** – Afghanistan Landmine Impact Survey  
**ALSO** – Afghan Landmine Survivors’ Organisation  
**ANDMA** – Afghan National Disaster Management Authority  
**AMAC** – Area Mine Action Centre  
**AMAS** – Afghanistan Mine Action Standards  
**ANDAP** – Afghanistan National Disability Action Plan  
**AOAD** – Accessibility Organisation for Afghan Disabled  
**AP** – Anti-Personnel  
**ARCS** – Afghan Red Crescent Society  
**AT** – Anti-Tank  
**ATC** – Afghan Technical Consultants  
**BF** – Battlefield  
**BPHS** – Basic Package of Health Services  
**BSC** – Balanced Scorecard  
**CBD** – Community-Based Demining  
**CSO** – Central Statistics Organisation  
**DAFA** – Demining Agency For Afghanistan  
**DAO** – Development and Ability Organisation  
**DDG** – Danish Deming Group  
**DMC** – Department for Mine Clearance  
**DoE** – Department of Education  
**DSU** – Disability Support Unit  
**EOD** – Explosive Ordnance Disposal  
**ERT** – Emergency Response Team  
**EU** – European Union  
**EUPOL** – European Union Police Mission  
**ERW** – Explosive Remnant of War  
**FGD** – Focus Group Discussion  
**GICHD** – Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining  
**GIROA** – Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan  
**GIS** – Geographic Information Systems  
**GMAP** – Gender and Mine Action Programme  
**HI** – Handicap International  
**HQ** – Headquarters  
**HT** – HALO Trust  
**IDP** – Internally Displaced Person  
**IED** – Improvised Explosive Device  
**IMSMA** – Information Management System for Mine Action  
**INGO** – International Non-Governmental Organisation  
**IP** – Implementing Partner  
**ISAF** – International Security Assistance Force  
**ISO** – International Standardisation Organisation  
**KII** – Key Informant Interview  
**KOO** – Kabul Orthopaedic Organisation  
**LIAS** – Landmine Impact Assessment Survey  
**MACCA** – Mine Action Coordination Centre of Afghanistan  
**MAPA** – Mine Action Programme of Afghanistan

**MCPA** – Mine Clearance Planning Agency  
**MDC** – Mine Detection Centre  
**MEIFECS** – Mine/ERW Impact Free Community Survey  
**MF** – Minefield  
**MIS** – Management and Information Systems  
**MoE** – Ministry of Education  
**MoJ** – Ministry of Justice  
**MoLSAMD** – Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs, Martyrs and Disabled  
**MoPH** – Ministry of Public Health  
**MRE** – Mine Risk Education  
**NGO** – Non-Governmental Organisation  
**NPP** – National Priority Programme  
**OECD** – Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development  
**OMAR** – Organisation for Mine clearance and Afghan Rehabilitation  
**PDIA** – Post Demining Impact Assessment  
**PIPS** – Project and IP Selection  
**PPIED** – Pressure Plated Improvised Explosive Device  
**QA** – Quality Assurance  
**QM** – Quality Management  
**RFP** – Request for Proposal  
**RMC** – Rotary Mine Comb  
**RO** – Regional Office  
**SH** – Samuel Hall  
**SHA** - Suspected Hazardous Area  
**SOP** – Standard Operating Procedure  
**SWOT** – Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats  
**TCN** – Troop Contributing Nation  
**ToR** – Terms of Reference  
**U.A.E.** – United Arab Emirates  
**UN** – United Nations  
**UNAMA** – United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan  
**UNMACA** – United Nations Mine Action Centre of Afghanistan  
**UNMAS** – United Nations Mine Action Service  
**UNODC** – United Nations Office for Drugs and Crime  
**UNOPS** – United Nations Office for Project Services  
**USAID** – United States Agency for International Development  
**USD** – United States Dollar  
**UXO** – Unexploded Ordnance  
**VA** – Victim Assistance  
**VTF** – Voluntary Trust Fund for assistance in mine action



# 1. INTRODUCTION

## 1. BACKGROUND OF THE EVALUATION

**Mine action in Afghanistan is at a crossroads.** Even though UNMAS is considered one of the most successful UN agencies in the country, its success story is at risk. As this report shows, the combined efforts of the United Nations, international donors and local stakeholders have enabled impressive achievements in a variety of fields. Nevertheless, the upcoming transition raises a number of questions, namely on funding and national ownership, that will impact the future of demining efforts in the country and determine whether the country will be able to achieve the obligations laid down by the international treaties it has signed.

**Almost forty years of conflict have led to Afghanistan being one of the countries with the highest concentration of minefields and explosive remnants of war in the world.** From a first demining effort called 'Operation Salam' coordinated by the United Nations that started in 1989, the programme has now had very positive results. Through its work, the MAPA has managed to resolve 80.7% of the problem and drastically reduce the number of casualties: from 26,710 recorded minefields covering 92% of districts, there are now 4,320 minefields left over 517.3 square kilometres. Furthermore, casualty rates have fallen from more than 700 per month in the 1990s, to an average of 39 per month nowadays<sup>2</sup>.

The present setup sees UNMAS, the UN agency created as a coordinating focal point for mine action across the world, responsible for allocating funds to the MAPA's implementing partners for clearance, mine risk education and victim assistance activities, for fund-raising and advocating for mine action with the government and international donors, and for allocating funds to MACCA, its coordination project in Afghanistan. UNMAS is also responsible for the oversight of all financial and procurement activities including contracting and projects funded by the Voluntary Trust Fund (VTF). MACCA is a UN project created by UNMAS. MACCA's role is to coordinate, manage and quality-check all actions and actors involved in mine action in Afghanistan, including the collection and vetting of data pertaining to hazardous locations. There are approximately 52 implementing partners that make up the MAPA, under the coordination of MACCA and the Department for Mine Clearance (DMC)<sup>3</sup>. That includes national and international Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs), local and international commercial companies and other international organisations. MACCA has a mandate to ensure all mine action activities in the country are conducted to the highest possible standards in order to reduce deadly risks and help communities, coordinate the whole MAPA on behalf of the government and finally to assist in a transition that should see the Afghan government take full ownership of those national managerial efforts through the DMC<sup>4</sup>.

**Despite its accomplishments, the remaining tasks for the MAPA and increasingly for the Afghan national authorities still represent an important challenge.** Current clearance efforts need to concentrate on areas that are difficult to reach due to insecurity and harsh terrain; the main mine and ERW hazards left to address in Afghanistan are now a majority of locations polluted primarily by anti-tank mines and unexploded ordnance in old and new battlefields. With the help of UNMAS, Afghanistan has secured a complex extension to the Ottawa Mine Ban Treaty focusing on a 2023 deadline for a mine-free nation. Yet, even though the remaining effort seems minimal in light of what has been accomplished in the past, **the MAPA currently finds itself in critical condition due to a lack of funding from donors, at a time when the international community is gradually disengaging itself from Afghanistan.**

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<sup>2</sup> MACCA – Overview of Mine Action in Afghanistan, slide 12

<sup>3</sup> MACCA – Overview of Mine Action in Afghanistan, slide 18

<sup>4</sup> MAPA – Strategy 2008-2013, p. 19

Internally, UNMAS has significantly evolved since 2008 and the start of a series of reforms of the mode of operation of the organisation, which included the “*Afghanisation*” of MACCA, a significant downsizing of the organisation, as well as technical adjustments on the ground. Yet, the overall architecture of the MAPA, led by UNMAS, has remained relatively stable.

Now that MACCA has established itself as a robust body of coordination, the subject of transition to full Afghan governmental ownership arises, in particular given the troop pull-out at the end of the year and increasingly visible donor fatigue with regards to funding given new priorities such as Syria, Iraq, etc. Past evaluations have already highlighted the progress made in this regards but also mention the limited national capacities and the lack of a clear and strong finalized legal mandate<sup>5</sup>. When adding the issue of the decrease in funding through the VTF and more generally some of the discrepancies in the relations between MACCA and the IPs<sup>6</sup>, it appears that, somewhat paradoxically, UNMAS and MACCA are in a delicate position, when there is still a considerable amount of work to be achieved.

**In this regard, and at a time of political transition, the present evaluation aims at shedding light on the key strengths and weaknesses of this organisation in order to support UNMAS in its effort to negotiate the current evolutions to which it has to adjust.** The evaluation is framed against the relevant strategies established by the organisation: UN Mine Action Strategies 2006-2010 (extended to 2012) and 2013-2018, as well as the MAPA Mine Action Strategy 2008-2013. The strategy of UNMAS has evolved from a primary objective of hazard reduction to a greater focus on victims through the identification of Victim Assistance as one of the key objectives of the organisation. A greater focus is also placed on the specific needs of various groups through the adoption of gender guidelines for mine action. Finally, a key evolution is a stronger emphasis placed on the transfer of capacities to national authorities, an important question in the Afghan context.

## 2. OBJECTIVES OF THE EVALUATION

The political transition and the consequent changes in the funding landscape call for UNMAS to rethink its position in Afghanistan in relation to its key projects and partners, namely MACCA, donors, IPs and the government of Afghanistan, in order to guarantee the sustainability of the mine action programme until its completion.

The present evaluation therefore focuses on assessing both these aspects:

- Looking back, it aims at analysing the various changes introduced since 2008 and assessing their impact on the MAPA and its ability to meet its objectives;
- Looking forward, it analyses the ability of the current structure to keep working efficiently while absorbing the various shocks likely to accompany the transition and suggest which adjustments could help guarantee the sustainability of the MAPA until completion of its mission.

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<sup>5</sup> GICHD – Assessment of the Mine Action Centre for Afghanistan, p. 35

<sup>6</sup> EU – Mid Term Evaluation of the MAPA, pp. 2-4

## 2. METHODOLOGY

### 1. RESEARCH FRAMEWORK

The evaluation, undertaken from April to July 2014 (with fieldwork in May and June), was conducted based on the research framework detailed below. The following research questions were designed based on the OECD Development Assistance Committee criteria for evaluating development assistance<sup>7</sup>.

#### ***Relevance – How relevant are UNMAS’ strategy and implementation priorities for a country in transition like Afghanistan?***

- Has MACCA proven able to adjust its implementation strategy to the specific needs of individuals and communities?
- Are MACCA’s activities consistent with the overall goal and the attainment of its objectives?
- Are UNMAS’ strategic objectives still relevant and realistic in Afghanistan, given the difficulty in funding the VTF?

#### ***Effectiveness – To what extent has UNMAS – and the MAPA more generally – been able to achieve its various objectives with equal success?***

- What has been accomplished so far in each compartment of the MAPA’s strategy? To what extent are the strategic objectives of the MAPA likely to be achieved by 2023?
- To what extent has the programme been successful in identifying and rectifying dysfunctions in the organisation early on?
- What are the major factors that can influence the non-achievement of the objectives?

#### ***Efficiency – Are resources used in the most efficient manner with regards to mine action in Afghanistan?***

- To what extent did the internal reforms of UNMAS and MACCA lead to a higher cost-efficiency?
- Is there more room for improvement?

#### ***Impact – What is the impact of UNMAS’ activities at the individual, community and national levels?***

- What was the impact of the past 5 years of mine action on the reduction of mine hazards?
- Is the socio-economic impact of mine clearance in areas where land has been released from hazards significant?
- Are there some disparities across gender, age groups, ethnic groups and migratory groups in terms of the impact of mine action in Afghanistan?
- How can UNMAS limit the socio-economic impact of the decrease in size of the programme and optimize the transition?

#### ***Sustainability – Is the MAPA in its current architecture sustainable in post-2014 Afghanistan?***

- What are the major factors that are likely to threaten the sustainability of the programme in the coming years and how can UNMAS anticipate these shocks?
- What explains the drop in funding and how can this be mitigated?
- What organisational adjustments would make the MAPA resilient to the evolutions to come?
- Has national ownership been achieved?

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<sup>7</sup> <http://www.oecd.org/dac/evaluation/daccriteriaforevaluatingdevelopmentassistance.htm>

In order to answer these research questions and cover the whole range of activities surrounding mine action for both UNMAS and MACCA, this evaluation was divided thematically. The five thematic areas covered by this evaluation are:

1. MACCA activities
2. Mine action activities
3. Gender and environment mainstreaming
4. Transition, a missed opportunity
5. Funding and advocacy

## 2. METHODOLOGY

### Evaluation tools

The evaluation was based on a variety of qualitative instruments and a thorough review of secondary data about the MAPA, mostly provided by MACCA. To ensure that every aspect of the evaluation was covered and all necessary information was gathered, the Samuel Hall team used the following qualitative tools.

- **Desk review and secondary data collection**

The evaluation team reviewed the existing internal and external reports, strategies, evaluations and standards pertaining to the MAPA as a whole. The desk review included evaluations and strategic documents about other mine action programmes in the world for a comparative stance on the MAPA. The desk review also allowed the research team to identify which of MACCA's datasets would be useful to measure changes on various indicators. Samuel Hall requested specific data and cross-tabs all along the evaluation to measure certain indicators and triangulate qualitative information collected during the fieldwork.

- **Key informant interviews**

A series of over 50 KIIs were conducted at the Kabul level, in four regional Afghan offices, at the UN in New York and via Skype as well. These targeted UNMAS and MACCA staff members, IPs, donors, government actors and external experts working on mine-related issues. Key Informant Interviews were conducted through semi-structured interviews, adjusted to the area of expertise of the respondents. Follow-up interviews were organised after fieldwork to cross-check information and test some of the preliminary findings.

- **Focus group discussions**

11 FGDs with men, women and children benefiting from clearance and/or MRE were also conducted in each of the 4 regions visited for this evaluation. The aim of these conversations was to give a voice to MAPA beneficiaries in order to get their perspectives on the implementation and direct and indirect impacts of mine action activities in their villages. The FGD guidelines covered a series of issues from the knowledge and awareness about demining activities, to the potential issues they raised, the impact they had on individuals and on the community as a whole and the perception of deminers. FGDs provided good material to identify risky behaviour as well as the differences in terms of perceptions of needs and risks across gender and age groups.

- **Case studies**

11 case studies with current and former deminers in each province were aimed at gathering particular insights on the work done by clearance IPs and the relations between staff members and the management. Case studies were designed to get information on the background, motivations and daily experience of deminers, including the different type of risks faced in their work. It also offered insights on the opportunities for deminers to find other jobs once their project finishes and on the perception that deminers have of the MAPA.

- **Office assessments**

A specific tool was designed to conduct a comparative assessment of the Regional Offices (ROs) visited, on a series of key aspects: relations and coordination with IPs, implementation effectiveness, intensity and quality of relations with the Afghan Nation Disaster Management Authority (ANDMA) at the provincial level, geographic coverage and acceptance. The office assessment also included the collection of data at the regional level, including level of completion of mine action activities in the region, gender breakdown of the staff, civilian victims etc. Finally, the office assessment gave the opportunity to map the reporting processes from the field to MACCA HQ.

- **Organisational review of the MAPA architecture**

The current structure of the MAPA (including UNMAS, MACCA, the DMC, ANDMA and IPs) was analysed in order to identify the areas of opportunity in terms of cost-effectiveness and sustainability.

### Fieldwork

Over the months of May and June 2014, the team conducted fieldwork in 4 different ROs to collect qualitative data on the functioning of the MAPA on the ground as well as the perception of beneficiaries across these provinces<sup>8</sup>. In order to cover the most important regions and MACCA centres that are the most active, the team evaluated the following regional offices: Kabul, Herat, Kandahar and Jalalabad.

In each region, the team met with all individuals and organisations involved in mine action activities. This included an introductory meeting with the local MACCA team and subsequent interviews with the government, IPs, current and former deminers and beneficiaries of the actual projects being implemented both in mine clearance and mine risk education.

The table below summarises the tools of the evaluation per province:

Location	Tool	Number	Targeted individuals
Kabul	KII	27	25
	FGD	3	14
	Case Studies	3	2
	Office Assessment	1	-
Herat	KII	9	9
	FGD	3	14
	Case Studies	2	2
	Office Assessment	1	-
Kandahar	KII	10	10
	FGD	2	11
	Case Studies	4	2
	Office Assessment	1	-

<sup>8</sup> In Jalalabad, the Eastern MACCA office covers Nangarhar, Laghman, Kunar and Nuristan. In Herat, the Western office covers Herat, Badghis, Ghor and Farah. The South focuses on Kandahar, Helmand, Nimroz, Uruzgan and Zabul. The Central and South-East office covers Kabul, Parwan, Logar, Wardak, Panjshir, Khost, Paktia and Ghazni.

Jalalabad	KII	8	8
	FGD	3	13
	Case Studies	2	2
	Office Assessment	1	-

TABLE 1: SUMMARY OF EVALUATION TOOLS BY PROVINCE

### 3. CHALLENGES IN DATA COLLECTION

#### Security

Linked to both the electoral period ongoing during the fieldwork and general security threats, the team was constrained in its choices of location to survey. In particular, it was decided to switch Kunduz for Herat due to the instability of this city around the second round of the elections. In terms of the team's safety and access to the needed locations in the districts surrounding the provincial centres, there were no incidents and common sense precautions in liaison with the relevant IPs led the work to be conducted only until early afternoon. Only one focus group discussion, with women in Kandahar, was not feasible due to access issues and notably enough, the focus group with men in the same province was inadvertently conducted with Taliban-affiliated community members. That was later discovered throughout the discussion and is in a way a tribute to the level of acceptance mine action programmes can have in the country.

#### Survey bias

Given that field visits to beneficiary communities in order to conduct focus group discussions were always organised following an introduction from the IP working in the area, the risk for possible biased answers amongst those communities surveyed is a possibility and should be kept in mind. However, no NGO staff members were present for the actual conversations.

After a preliminary analysis of the qualitative data, it became clear that the information collected within the 'MAPA family', meaning stakeholders directly involved in mine action activities, was at risk of being biased given the overreliance on inside actors. In order to palliate this issue and get more varied points of view, a second round of interviews in the same areas was conducted on the phone. These telephonic interviews were addressed at actors outside of the MAPA-international organisations, INGOs, NGOs and government figures such as UN agencies, district authorities, etc.

# 3. FINDINGS – Evaluating Mine Action in Afghanistan

## A. MACCA, A Success Story?

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### KEY FINDINGS

- Through a series of reforms implemented since 2007/08, MACCA has significantly increased its own efficiency and effectiveness, as well as that of the MAPA as a whole.
- In particular, since 2008, MACCA has achieved a successful process of ‘autonomisation’ of its IPs. If still ongoing, this process has had a real impact on the quality of the services IPs deliver, on their productivity on the ground and on their planning and reporting capacities.
- The integration between a robust information management system, the planning and the QM department of MACCA is very efficient. This structure has a huge impact on the effectiveness and performance of the MAPA as a whole through a tight prioritisation system that allows for a smart and rapid allocation of resources throughout the programme. It guarantees the relevance of mine action activities through the regular revision of the priority system based on changing dynamics on the ground.
- Despite the efficient prioritisation system set up by MACCA, two main groups seem to fall in the cracks and continue to be at greater risk than others: Kuchis/nomads and young boys scrapping metals. While MACCA is aware of these specific types of vulnerability, the system is not refined enough to decrease the risk they face.
- The main weakness of MACCA is its questionable sustainability as a 150-staff organisation costing about \$7.6 Million in 1393 is simply unaffordable for the GIRoA. At the moment, the solution privileged by UNMAS and MACCA is to keep MACCA running for as long as the risk is significant, postponing further the transition (see section below).<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> The findings of this section are based on KIIs with MACCA staff, with IPs’ staff; with UNMAS staff and the analysis of secondary data about the programme over the past 6 years.



## OVERVIEW OF KEY INDICATORS

KEY INDICATORS - MACCA	
✓	Decreased budget of coordination between 2008 and 2014
✓	Increased productivity of MACCA between 2008 and 2014
✓	Autonomisation of the IPs
✓	Obtaining a 10-year extension for the Ottawa Treaty
✓	Increased average BSC scores of the IPs between 2010 and 2014
✓	Decrease in the number of demining accidents between 2008 and 2014 and regular decrease in the number of demining accidents per number of deminers per year.
✗	Completion of the MEIFCS
✗	Development of a robust impact assessment tool
✗	Development of specific mechanisms for the most vulnerable groups

At the heart of the MAPA lies the Mine Action Coordination Centre of Afghanistan. Because its main responsibilities relate to coordination and quality assurance, MACCA is often mistakenly perceived as an administrative body – and a costly one. Yet, this evaluation confirms that MACCA’s role has been crucial in the successful implementation of the MAPA throughout the years. The structure has also proven its flexibility, important adaptive capacities and openness to reforms and evolutions, increasing its effectiveness throughout the years.

***“Without the work of coordination that MACCA is doing, none of us, none of the IPs could do its work properly”.***

Key informant Interview, IP Staff, Herat province.

### 1. SCOPE: THE RELEVANCE OF MACCA

One way of measuring the impact of an organisation like MACCA is to assess the scale of the task it has to tackle. In Afghanistan, an organisation like MACCA is hugely relevant given the characteristics of the MAPA; it is structured as follows<sup>10</sup>:

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<sup>10</sup> Source: Samuel Hall (2012), Community Based Approaches for Improving MRE and Perceptions of Deminers

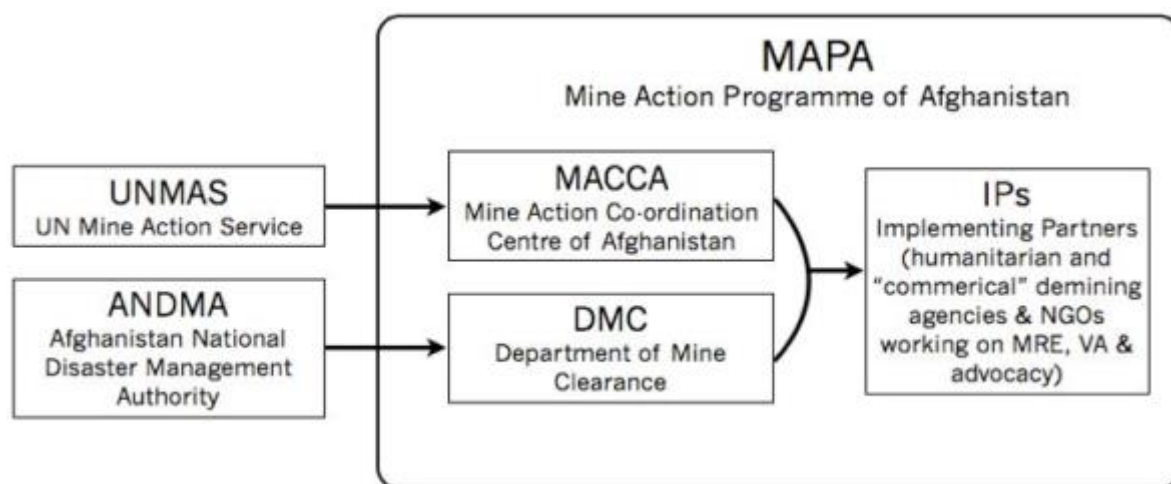


Figure 1: The MAPA architecture<sup>11</sup>

The constellation of actors that MACCA has to coordinate includes 15 humanitarian Implementing Partners and 30 commercial demining organisations. The total number of people working within the MAPA is nowadays of approximately 8,885 people but this number varies considerably depending on funding and projects. At its programming peak in 2011, the MAPA counted approximately 14,000 people.

Furthermore, MACCA is also in charge of a mine action programme of very large scale, with various types and periods of contamination and a changing nature of the risk. As of 2014, and after about 25 years of demining activities in the country, the remaining contamination is still very important and explains the need for an organisation like MACCA to orchestrate demining activities. The following tables illustrate the scope of the problem, the different types of hazards affecting the country and its geographic spread:

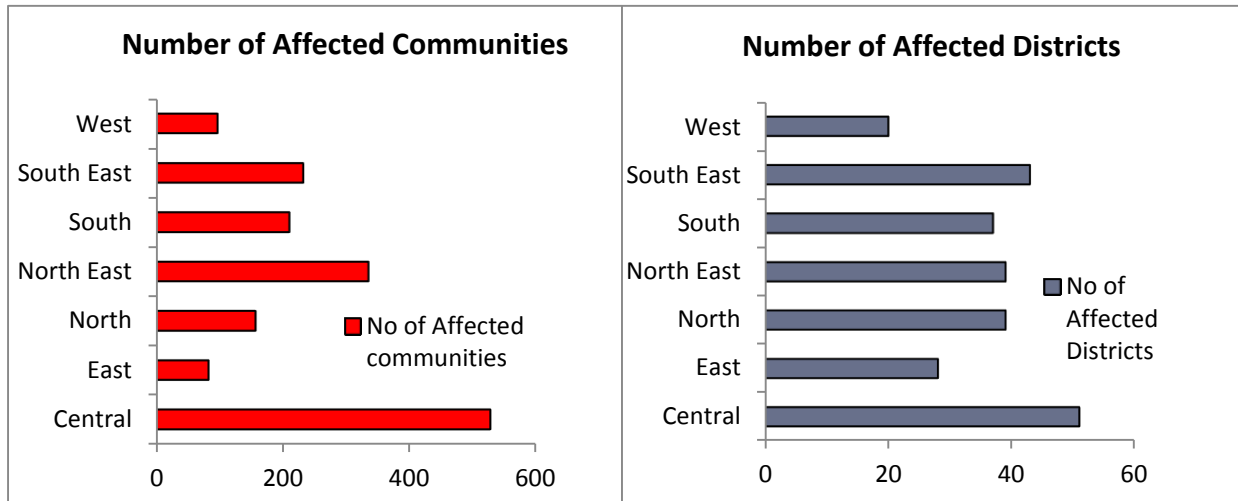
Type of Hazard	# of Hazards	Area in sq km
Battlefield (BF)	189	34.04
Converted from SHA	760	215.95
Firing Range	59	501.82
Minefield	3,364	269.31
Spot ERW	34	1.11
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>4,407</b>	<b>1,021.12</b>

TABLE 2: REMAINING CONTAMINATION PER TYPE OF HAZARDS<sup>12</sup>

As shown in table 2 the nature of hazards is varied and new hazards appear in link with the ongoing conflict. Firing ranges for example represent one of these more recent challenges for the demining programme in Afghanistan. The problem of mines is widespread in the country, with the Central Region concentrating an important share of the remaining hazards:

<sup>11</sup> Samuel Hall (2012), Community Based Approaches for Improving MRE and Perceptions of Deminers.

<sup>12</sup> Source: MACCA, June 2014.



Graph 1: Number of affected communities by region

Graph 2: Number of affected districts by region

As shown by this brief overview of what remains to be done to demine Afghanistan, the types, coverage and regions affected by hazards are varied and require the intervention of an overarching institution to coordinate their clearance.

## 2. MACCA'S REFORMS: INCREASED EFFICIENCY & EFFECTIVENESS

MACCA has 6 core functions, summarised in the graph below:

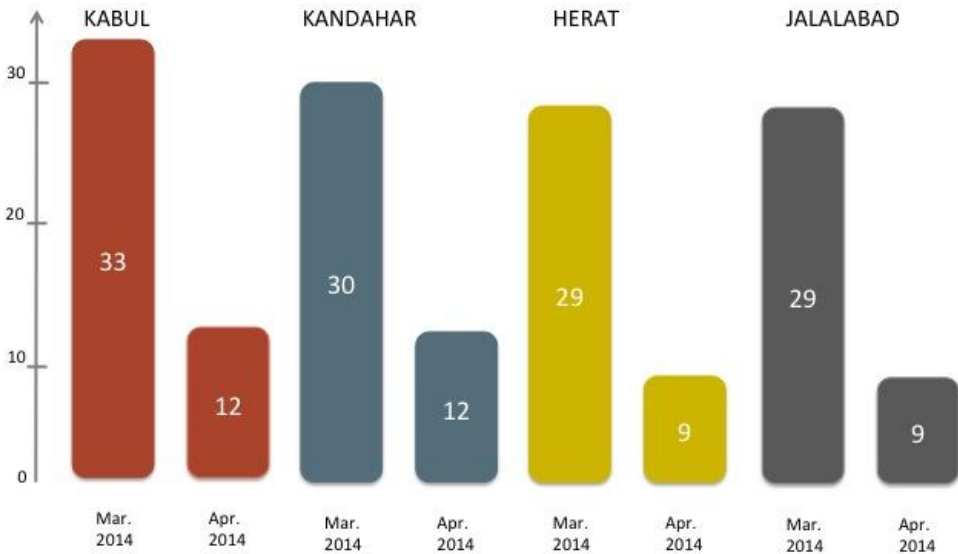


Figure 2: MACCA's core functions

Since 2008, the organisation has conducted several reforms of its structure and functioning, leading to an increased productivity and a higher level of effectiveness of the organisation itself and of the MAPA as a whole. This section will review the most important of these reforms and assess the impact they had on the organisation's efficiency and effectiveness.

**2.1 “Right-sizing” the organisation**

The decrease in funding triggered a general decrease of the size of the MAPA, to which MACCA had to respond by adjusting its own size to increase its effectiveness. “Right-sizing” is the internal term chosen by MACCA management to describe the series of processes the organisation went through to decrease its workforce. **Between 2008 and 2014, MACCA reduced its workforce by about 70% with a workforce decreasing from 370 staff members to 150 in April 2014 after the last round of right-sizing conducted.** The following graph illustrates the impact of the 2014 “right-sizing” on the 4 field offices assessed for this evaluation:



**Graph 3: Evolution of the number of staff per field office in 2014**

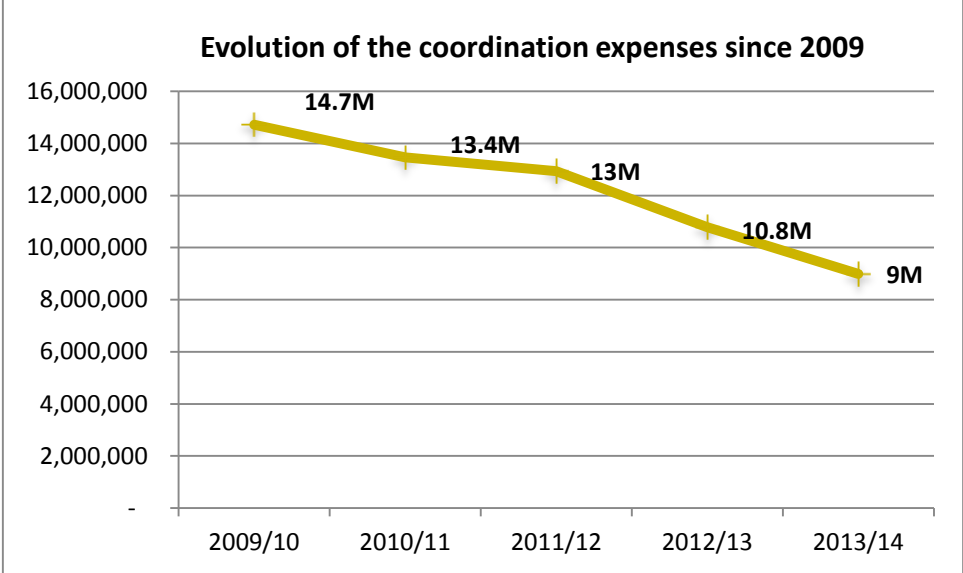
Interestingly, and illustrating the way MACCA functions more generally, the downsizing process was the result of a large internal consultation that lasted for almost a year to define what would be the appropriate new structure<sup>13</sup>. It included internal discussions and a review of each position’s Terms of Reference (ToRs) and areas of focus in order to identify potential overlaps and where positions were redundant or less useful. This consultation led to the creation of a new organogram for the institution with the merging of some of the departments: the Information Management System Department was moved under the umbrella of the Operations, Research and Development, while the Planning and Programming departments were merged into one. Both changes make sense from an organisational point of view, as the departments, which were merged, had functions closely related to each other.

Evidence that this downsizing was necessary is found in the fact that most of the staff interviewed for this evaluation showed support for the process, even though it usually increased their own workload, sometimes significantly. The process was based on an important effort of internal

<sup>13</sup> Key Informant Interviews with MACCA HQ and Regional staff members

communication, to the point that MACCA field employees have adopted the term ‘right-sizing’ to describe the staff cuts.

The latest staff reduction was implemented too recently in 2014 for this evaluation to adequately measure the impact on MACCA’s efficiency. Still, it will reinforce the cost-reduction trend at MACCA, a trend visible in the sums from the VTF allocated to coordination over the years since 2009, as those decreased from 14.7 Million USD to 9 Million last year<sup>14</sup> and 7.6 Million this year (2014-2015) following the right-sizing process:



Graph 4: Evolution of the funds from the VTF spent on coordination between 2009 and 2014

In absolute terms, the costs of coordination have decreased, with a stronger reduction ongoing since 2012. The proportion of funds spent on coordination compared to the overall funds of the MAPA has been relatively stable varying between 11% and 15% of the total funds over the years. The decrease in absolute spending is not matched by a decrease in proportionate spending as the variations of funding impact the implementation funds (clearance, MRE and VA) more significantly, with reductions or increases of the number of projects implemented in the field. Overall, this trend shows an increased efficiency of the organisation, as well as illustrating the internal commitment to decrease the costs of coordination for the MAPA.

Yet, according to various stakeholders both within MACCA and from the IPs, one key function of MACCA could be negatively impacted by the reduction of staff: Quality Management (QM). Concerns were raised both at the Headquarter level and in the field about the impact of the staff reduction on Quality Assurance (QA). The QM department went from 50 field staff and 9 staff at the central level to 15 field staff and 6 at the central level, limiting the number of external QA visits that the organisation can conduct. Overall, it meant for the structure a shift towards a focus on internal quality management (within MACCA) to the detriment of external quality assessment. The MACCA QM department now focuses on checking the internal management of IPs and on random checks in the field, for a total of 300 monitoring field visits per quarter.

This evolution was perceived by various actors of the MAPA in the field, sometimes with worry, as IPs in the field felt that they could expect less support from MACCA:

- *MACCA focuses on internal quality checks now. Before, they used to come to the sites and to see the teams themselves. Now they only come once every 3 months and check mostly the*

<sup>14</sup> Source: UNMAS data. No breakdown available for 2008. The funding breakdown was calculated based on the Afghan year (1st of April to 31st of March).

*management and do not see the work of the deminers. Now they check the system in the field and not the actual work done by the teams. – KII IP Staff Member*

- *Now the QA is project-based. In 2012, there was a reduction of staff and our focus changed to the quality control of management and of that of the IPs. – KII MACCA Field Staff*
- *The staff reduction is fine, we can do the same work or even more with the staff we now have. The only thing is that we need more staff for external evaluations and quality assurance. – KII MACCA HQ Staff*

Prior to 2011, MACCA was delivering QA in lieu of the IPs developing their own quality management processes. By the end of 2011, external QA results had improved significantly as a result of MACCA's efforts. This led to a shift in focus to empowering the IPs to develop their own QM systems. Instead of checking every team, MACCA now focuses on checking the management structures of the IPs combined with random testing of teams in the field.

## 2.2 Evolution of the relation between MACCA and the IPs: towards more autonomy?

One of the key areas that witnessed important reforms is the relationship between MACCA and the IPs. Introduced under the impulse of the new management arrived in 2007/08, a series of measures were implemented aiming at increasing a) the autonomy and ownership of the IPs; b) their cost-effectiveness; and c) the quality and accountability of their work in the field. The 'new business model'<sup>15</sup> developed by MACCA since 2008 is now fully implemented and it is possible to measure its impact on the productivity of the MAPA as a whole. By moving away from the micro-management of IPs, the idea was for MACCA to be able to allocate more time and resources towards the management and strategy of the MAPA as a whole<sup>16</sup>. **About 5 years after these reforms started, all stakeholders agree that they have had a huge impact on the relevance, the efficiency and the effectiveness of MACCA, and hence of the MAPA as a whole.**

***Working with the IPs was a real challenge back in the days. MACCA used to act as a project office or a headquarter for the IPs, especially the national ones.***

KII – MACCA HQ Staff

### ▪ Regionalisation of Implementing Partners

The regionalisation of IPs was a first step in the process of rationalisation of the MAPA and of increasing the efficiency of the relationship between MACCA and its IPs. The main idea of the regionalisation was for IPs to shift focus from the Central Region and increase the coverage towards other regions of the country. IPs were requested to open regional offices, based on guidelines provided by MACCA. This movement was inscribed in a larger push of MACCA to get IPs to work in more insecure and challenging areas and expand their coverage, leading to the development of mine action in new districts of Kandahar or Helmand provinces for example. The MAPA strategy also insisted on the necessity for IPs to specialise in certain regions of the country. While the push towards the regions was efficient, the second aspect of the regionalisation seems more debatable five years onwards, with some of the IPs like MDC or MCPA keeping regional offices in various regions, as seen in the table below and confirmed through interviews with IPs:

<sup>15</sup> Term coined by the GICHD in their 2008 Evaluation to characterise the first evolutions they observed at the time. See GICHD, 2008, p.21.

<sup>16</sup> Davies, P. & Todd, B. (2008), *Mid Term Evaluation of the Mine Action Programme in Afghanistan*, p.2.

Area	Implementing Partner	Clearance	Mine Risk Education	Victim Assistance
<b>East</b> Nangarhar, Laghman, Kunar, Nuristan	MDC	√		
	ARCS		√	
	MCPA	√		
	DAO			√
<b>West</b> Herat, Farah, Badghis, Ghor	HT	√		
	ARCS		√	
	HI			√
<b>South</b> Kandahar, Helmand, Nimroz, Uruzgan, Zabul	DAFA	√		
	MCPA	√		
	MDC	√		
	OMAR	√		
	ARCS		√	
	HI		√	√
	AOAD			√
<b>Central and South East</b> Kabul, Parwan, Logar, Wardak, Panjshir, Khost, Paktia, Ghazni	MCPA	√	√	
	ATC	√		
	MDC	√		
	DAFA	√		
	HT	√		
	DDG	√		
	OMAR	√		

TABLE 3: AREAS OF OPERATIONS AND SECTORS OF ACTIVITIES OF IPs

- **“Projectisation” of MAPA activities**

**Process** - One of the main steps in the process of increasing the level of autonomy and capacity of IPs was to change the system of resource allocation for the implementation of mine action activities for a project-based approach, also called ‘*projectisation*’ in the organisation. This move dates back to 2008/09. This means that the IPs and MACCA articulate mine action activities in a certain area (group of communities) or district in a single project that is awarded to one of the IPs, either through a Request for Proposals (RFP) or a pre-select waiver. Based on the data available on IMSMA, IPs were increasingly asked to come up with their own plan based on the priorities and strategic goals developed by MACCA and the DMC for their area of coverage. IPs’ interventions are now due to be inscribed in a formal project cycle; the IPs have to formulate clear targets and outcomes for their project and have to report on the progress made until a final evaluation of the project takes place at the end and feeds into future planning<sup>17</sup>. This significantly changed the approach and the relationship between MACCA and the IPs; previously, MACCA Regional Offices would simply tell the IPs what to do and where to do it.

Since the implementation of the *projectisation* of mine action activities, the process has gained robustness through the introduction of what is called a Project and IP Selection (PIPS) process in 2010. The PIPS increased the scrutiny surrounding the allocation of projects to IPs, hence forcing them to develop proposals up to the standards of the organisation.

<sup>17</sup> See the 1391 MAPA Integrated Operation Framework, p. 10 to 14.



**Impact of a project-based approach** - The 2008 evaluation pointed at the potential risks that such an evolution in the processes between MACCA and the IPs could raise. The main risk was the fact that the IPs, especially the Afghan humanitarian ones, would not have the capacity to adjust and absorb these changes, given how used they had gotten to the 'paternalistic' system in place beforehand<sup>18</sup>.

**Six years down the road, the impact of these reforms is very positive:**

- **Building up IPs' capacities** – Imposing stricter bidding mechanisms has forced many IPs to catch up with the skills they were lacking, in particular when it came to reporting, proposal writing and planning. While this gap is still not completely filled even with international NGOs such as HALO Trust or Handicap International, national IPs have not disappeared with this reform and are able to fulfil MACCA's requirements.
- **Increasing IPs' autonomy** – These capacities allow all of the IPs to conduct direct fundraising with embassies to access bilateral funding and get some of their projects funded, diversifying the sources of financing available to them. The process therefore did trigger an increased autonomy and sense of responsibility, as hoped for by MACCA and UNMAS' management. Yet, this impact on IPs is not evenly distributed across organisations and some IPs do struggle to take these changes on board<sup>19</sup> – especially to take into account the fact that they should be doing independent fund raising to finance their projects, instead of waiting for UNMAS to support projects through the VTF or other contributions.
- **Improving cost-effectiveness** – The competitive bidding process was taken along by other funding actors, such as the State Department, which now exclusively competitively tenders the demining activities it supports<sup>20</sup>. This competitive bidding and overall increased pressure on the IPs, combined with the poor capacity of some of them to get funding on their own, may push some of them on the brink of disappearing<sup>21</sup>. Yet, some stakeholders see benefits in such a dynamic as it would lead to potential savings on the overhead costs of these organisations and reduce the coordination burden for MACCA, increasing the overall cost-effectiveness of the MAPA.
- **Quality at risk?** On the other hand, this competitive logic may have been pushed too far, according to some of the IPs who see the cost of the square metre cleared decreasing below reasonable prices. While some donors see this trend as positive, IPs argue that the cuts are likely to impact quality and that too low of a price will de facto make it difficult for some of the most established actors of the MAPA to bid reasonably<sup>22</sup>. It is important to remember though, that the cost per square metre cleared is just one of the factors considered in the bidding process and that others such as the IP's knowledge, its accident rate, etc. receive the same or more attention.

- **Quality Monitoring and Balanced Scorecards (BSC)**

Another key evolution that took place during the period under review is the introduction of robust monitoring and quality assessment mechanisms for the projects and the IPs. Part of that was linked to the *projectisation*, which allowed MACCA to request IPs to establish clearer milestones, indicators of progress and targets, greatly facilitating the M&E process. But going further, MACCA set up an innovative system of Balanced Scorecards (BSC) at the beginning of 1388 (2009), marking IPs'

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<sup>18</sup> See GICHD, 2008, p.21.

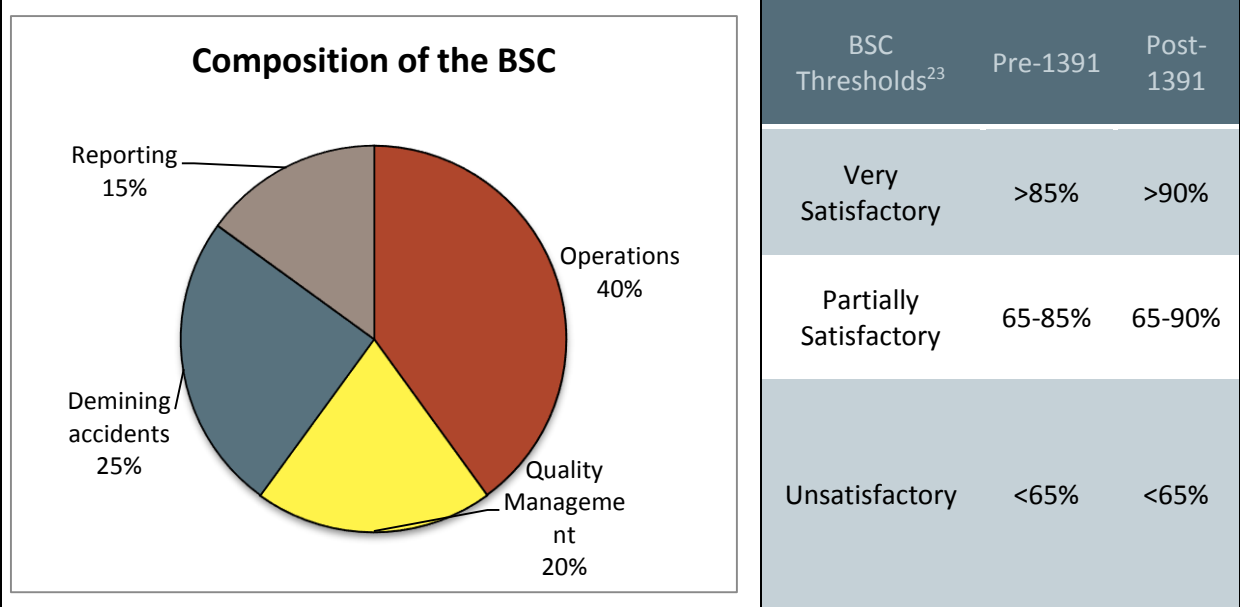
<sup>19</sup> Key Informant Interview with a UNMAS staff member

<sup>20</sup> Key Informant Interview with a Donor

<sup>21</sup> Key Informant Interviews with a UNMAS staff member and IPs

<sup>22</sup> Key Informant Interviews with IPs' staff members

performance on a scale of 0 to 100. Initially, the BSC consisted of five sets of indicators: a) operations; b) quality management; c) demining accidents; d) costs; and e) reporting. The cost issue is no longer an indicator in the BSC, although it is considered during proposal review. While delivering demining services has the most importance, the BSC represented a great approach for MACCA and UNMAS to instigate change and a desire to improve in the practices of the IPs. The BSC now takes into account four sets of indicators based on the following weighting:



Graph 5: Breakdown of BSC areas in percentages

The 2008 evaluations recommended for the MAPA to bear a lot more attention to the understanding and prevention of demining accidents, something that the BSC helps addressing, as it represents the second most important indicators (25%) behind operations. Adding reporting to the BSC was also a way for MACCA to incentivise national IPs to get up to speed on this important part of the job.

**Impact of the BSC** – Over the years, the IPs have increasingly caught up with the standards set up by MACCA as shown by the increase in the average quarterly BSC scores of demining IPs, going from between 76 and 82% in 1388 to up to 97% for the last quarter of 1391. The fact that all IPs are now in the category of ‘very satisfactory’ is a great tribute to the IPs’ increased capacities and as well as the effort of capacity building that MACCA made. Most IPs in the field recognised the incentive that the BSC represented for their organisation to build up their capacities and pay attention to the standards they were requested to abide to.

Yet, it also shows that the BSC may be not refined enough as an instrument to differentiate efficiently between the various implementing organisations. This reduces the impact of such an instrument. Furthermore, the BSC only offers a national score for the IPs, which does not help identifying the regional strengths and/or weaknesses of organisations. In an effort to further push to achieve the regionalisation of IPs’ work, calculating a regional BSC for each organisation would help. IPs however do not have presence in all regions and it might therefore be difficult to calculate the BSC on a regional base; but projects might be measured regionally. Finally, the BSC has the tendency to flatten the differences between IPs. In particular, it does not take into account the specific policies and innovations that IPs may have developed to improve the quality of their work: e.g. internal gender policy; impact assessment mechanisms; environmental procedures; ability to implement

<sup>23</sup> The names of each category were also changed in 1391. Former categories were designated as highly satisfactory, acceptable and poor.

community-based projects etc. Developing the scope of indicators used to evaluate the IPs would be a good opportunity to push for the actual implementation of some changes on the ground. The following box suggests some ways to increase the relevance and impact of the BSC, used as a strategic instrument to keep the quality of the work high but also instigate change in the practices of IPs on the ground:

#### Defining a Post 2014 BSC System

- ❖ Coordinate with donors to ensure that BSCs are used by donors for bilateral funding
- ❖ Develop regional BSC for each IP in order to push further the regionalisation of their work
- ❖ Increase the level of differentiation made possible by the BSC by adding criteria useful for the future of the organisation. That may include:
  - Gender Policy and SOPs in place
  - Inclusion of women in the management staff of the IPs
  - Ability to implement community-based projects
  - Ability and presence of SOPs to conduct impact assessment
  - Presence of environmental SOPs

Furthermore, MACCA introduced an internal Balanced Scorecard System to measure and analyse its own performance in 2013. It is too early for this evaluation to assess the impact of this measure on MACCA's performance but it is a robust and well-designed instrument for internal management and is likely to further increase MACCA's efficiency and effectiveness.

→ Overall, the series of reforms introduced by MACCA to change the nature of its relationship with the humanitarian IPs was a success and has had a very positive impact on the IPs, on MACCA and on the MAPA as a whole. It increased the quality of the services delivered by the IPs, gave them more autonomy and independence from MACCA and freed up some time for MACCA to focus on information management, QA, strategy and planning, its core responsibilities.

### 3. INFORMATION AND KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT: TOWARDS MORE RELIABLE DATA

Linked to the changes detailed above, the period 2008-2014 saw MACCA work hard on improving the quality and reliability of the data it bases its strategy and programming upon. Until 2009, MACCA was mostly relying on the information collected by the 2005 Landmine Impact Assessment Survey (LIAS). A series of surveys have been conducted to verify and update the IMSMA database, used for planning and programming. Each survey usually leads to the cancellation of some hazards from the database as well as the identification of new ones. In terms of survey, the main milestones since 2008 have been:

- 2008-2009: **Polygon Survey conducted in 138 districts out of the 400 contaminated by mines.** MACCA decided to stop using the Suspected Hazardous Area (SHA) denomination for that of Mine field (MF) and converted all the data kept in IMSMA at the MF and/or BF levels. The continuous recording of contaminated areas into IMSMA keeps on adding MFs into the database. As of November 2011, the cut-off point for the data

used to write the Ottawa Extension Request, 4,867 AP contaminated areas covering an area of 345.3 square kilometres were still to be cleared<sup>24</sup>.

- From May 2012 onwards, and following the successful request for an extension to the Ottawa treaty, **MACCA launched the implementation of a large Mine/ERW Impact Free Community Survey (MEIFCS)**. The 2005 ALIS survey identified impacted communities and non-impacted communities but this list needed to be updated as MACCA recorded casualties and accidents from communities registered as non-impacted in the database. The survey is comprehensive – and one of the biggest of MACCA’s projects – as surveyor teams have the capacity to destroy on the spot limited hazards. Yet, the MEIFCS ran into difficulties to keep its original schedule. Based on the list of communities recorded by the Central Statistics Office (*gazetteer*), MACCA launched a large survey of impacted communities. Scheduled to last for 2 years, the survey had to be extended for at least two additional years as surveyor teams kept on finding communities that were not officially registered in the *gazetteer*. The MEIFCS allows MACCA to declare communities ‘impact-free’ from known hazards. There are checks and balances in the mechanisms as both the community and the district authorities have to certify that the survey was completed in the village.

#### A GAP IN ANALYSIS – Difficulties in measuring the impact of demining on development

Measuring the impact of demining on development remains a challenging exercise for MACCA. A 2009 assessment of the Post Demining Impact Assessments (PDIAs) noted the general disconnect existing between the PDIAs conducted in the field, almost as part of an administrative procedure, and the analytical use made of it to inform decision-making<sup>25</sup>. Since then, MACCA tried to develop its capacities by conducting several Land and Livelihoods Assessment with the support of the GICHD. These reports provide a wealth of qualitative information on the use of the land after release. Yet, despite some precise case studies, these analyses struggle to quantify the economic and development impact that demining activities have had at the local – and potentially – at the national level<sup>26</sup>. In a situation where UNMAS struggles to raise funds, this gap is increasingly problematic as it limits the organisation’s access to development donors. This point and potential ways to quantify the development impact and inscribe it in a larger donor strategy will be developed in details in section 3.5.

#### 4. ACHIEVEMENTS AND IMPACT: SITUATIONAL ANALYSIS, PROGRAMMING AND QUALITY ASSURANCE

MACCA suffers from a lack of understanding among donors and stakeholders outside the MAPA on how crucial its role is to leading the MAPA towards its objectives. Far from an administrative body, MACCA has developed an exceptional system where verified data from the field feeds directly into programming and prioritisation of activities. While this may sound trivial and should perhaps be considered to be a normal thing, it is a huge challenge for many humanitarian and development organisations, as well as for governmental actors, in a country where reliable national data and robust information management system are quasi-absent.

<sup>24</sup> Ottawa Treaty Extension Request, p.72-73.

<sup>25</sup> Azarbaijani-Moghaddam, S. (2009), Assessment of Post Demining Impact Assessment for MACCA.

<sup>26</sup> GICHD and MACCA (2012), Livelihoods Analysis of Landmines/ERW Affected Communities in Herat province, p.24

#### 4.1 “One of the key strengths of MACCA is its capacity of analysis”<sup>27</sup>

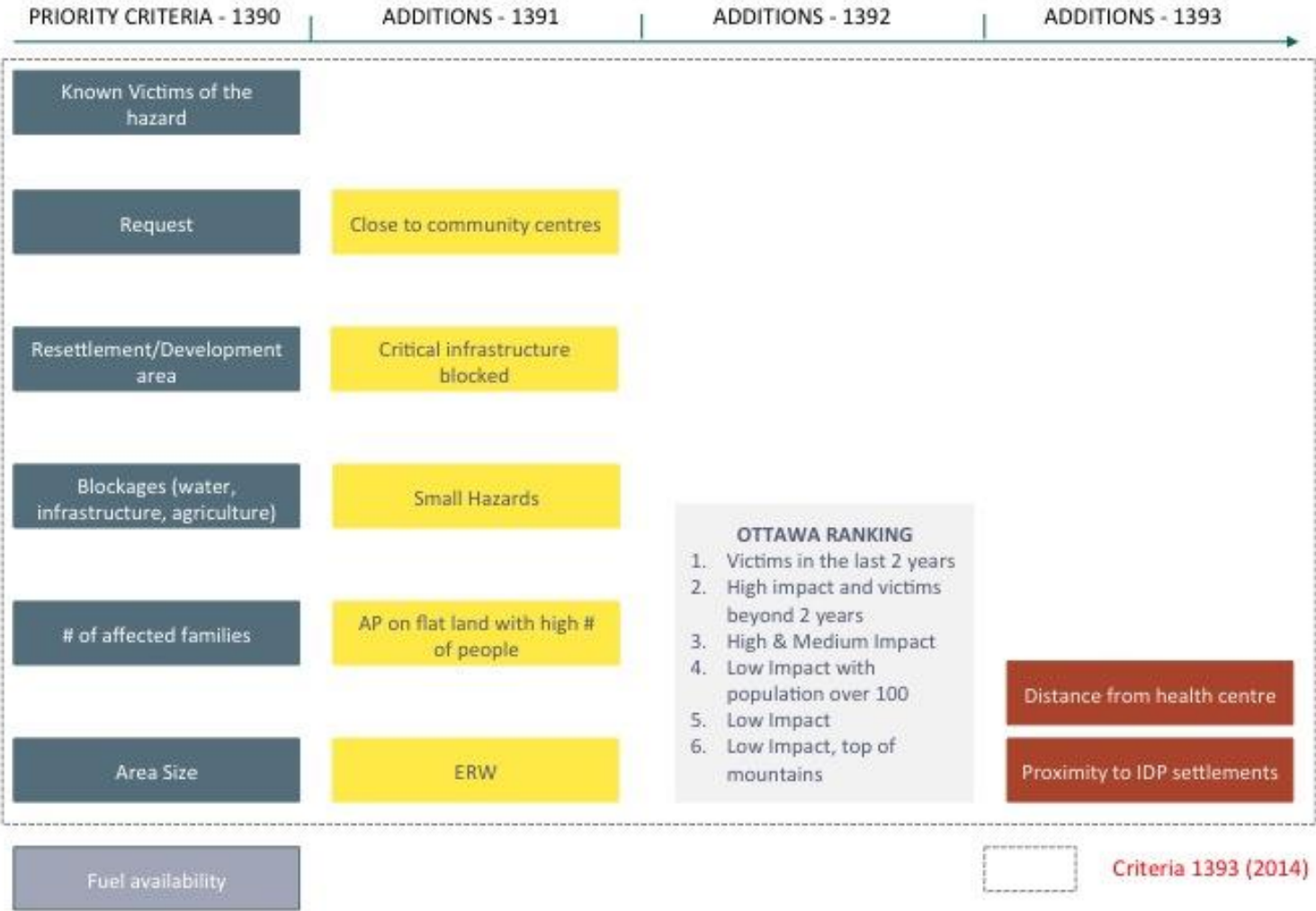
The link between data, analysis and programming is indeed a real strength of the organisation. This capacity was reinforced by the use of IMSMA-New Generation since November 2010. MACCA received the support of the GICHD, which designed the database and trained MACCA in its use. IMSMA-New Generation is accessible to all actors of the MAPA, including IPs, even though the data entry is only in the hand of the Management Information System (MIS) department at HQ level. Beyond data collection and analysis, the organisation has nurtured a ‘culture of consultation’ and of internal reflexion within the MAPA that is a real strength in a field where technological innovations or management process can have an important impact in the field.

The flexibility and regular review of the prioritisation system used to plan for demining activities over the years is a good illustration of this process and of both MACCA’s reflexive capacities and of its ability to transpose analytical findings into concrete changes for the programme. There were three main phases in the evolution of the priority system of MACCA, showing the ability of the organisation to adjust to new social developments and to take into account an increasingly fine range of criteria: a) in the first phase, the focus was put, apart from the number of victims, on the impact of landmines and ERW on the development of communities: type of land contaminated (grazing, agricultural etc.), residential land impacted or land for potential development; b) In its operational framework for 2010-11, MACCA refined its prioritisation criteria, adding the size of the community, fuel availability and size of the hazard to its matrix. The matrix was then further developed for the Extension Request in 2012 and additional parameters were added up until last year. The following figure gives an overview of the 2012 MACCA reliance on a classification of high/medium/low impact definitions based on the following criteria:

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<sup>27</sup> Key Informant Interview with a UNOPS staff member

Figure 3: Evolution of the parameters to identify areas to be demined in priority (1390 to 1393)



As shown in Figure 3, a series of new parameters were added throughout the years to adjust to the context more closely:

- **Integrating women’s perceptions** – In particular, the criterion “close to community centre” came from the conclusions of a survey showing that the presence of mines close to community centres – and to key buildings, such as the mosque – made women particularly anxious. The criterion was added in an effort to better integrate the gendered impact of minefields in the priority system.
- **Integrating the Ottawa Ranking** – Following the extension of the Ottawa treaty until 2023, the Ottawa ranking was included in the priority system, while keeping the definitions of high/medium or low impact areas based on the list of parameters described above.
- **Adjusting to changing migration dynamics** – The IDP parameter added in 2014 comes from field observations showing that the IDPs are more vulnerable to mines given their lack of knowledge of the area. This shows a fine understanding and inclusion of the migratory dynamics in MACCA system, which used to prioritize returnees when hundreds of thousands of Afghans were coming back from Iran and Pakistan, returning to communities that had been heavily contaminated in their absence. The dynamics changed drastically with a stall in returns as UNHCR only recorded about 39 000 returns in 2013<sup>28</sup>. On the other hand, internal displacement has been on the rise and the country now counts more than 630,000 conflict-induced IDPs<sup>29</sup> and is characterised by sudden movements of natural-disaster induced IDPs. In 2013, 242 natural disaster incidents were recorded (...) affecting over 13,000 families, of which 1,517 became IDPs<sup>30</sup>.
- **Including a VA component to the priority system** – Distance to the nearest health centre was also added in 2013 in response to the need for the MAPA to better integrate the requirements of victim assistance in the framework, as the consequences of an accident may change drastically if the victim can be taken care of rapidly or not. This parameter required an important effort of analysis from MACCA to map out the existing health centres in the country.

Overall, the changing priority matrix used by MACCA for its planning is a good example of how efficient the organisation is at identifying, analysing and integrating new parameters from the field into its planning.

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<sup>28</sup> UNHCR, (March 2014), Vol. Rep. and Border Monitoring – Monthly Update.

<sup>29</sup> UNHCR Statistics (January 2014) estimated the number of conflict induced IDPs to be of 631, 286.

<sup>30</sup> IOM, (2013), Humanitarian Assistance Program Cumulative Report – Jan-Oct 2013. Cited in Samuel Hall, (2014), Displacement Dynamics: IDP Movement Tracking, Needs and Vulnerability Analysis, commissioned by IOM. p. 4



## GAPS IN THE PRIORITY SYSTEM

Based on the findings from the field, two groups at risk are potentially left out or only indirectly included in the prioritisation system developed by MACCA:

- ❖ **Nomadic population** – Focus group discussions and interviews with community leaders confirmed that Kuchis are still particularly at risk as they use the grazing lands for pasture.
  - *“People’s sheep were also killed by mines and that happened many times. The nomads graze their sheep there and they are killed by mines.”* FGD Men – Kabul
  - *“Demining is very important and many people and nomads have been killed by mines.”* FGD Men – Kabul
  - *“A Kuchi who had newly moved here put his foot over a mine and lost his foot. It happened about one year ago; the mine was like a bowl. He was alive and the foreigners came and took him to the hospital in the district centre.”* – FGD Children – Kandahar

The specific vulnerability of Kuchi populations comes from a) the fact they have less knowledge of the area than sedentary groups as well as from the fact that Kuchis live off livestock production and need pasture lands for their livelihoods. The issue of nomadic groups is not unknown of MACCA, which used to prioritise ‘grazing lands’ in part with the goal of mitigating the risks for these groups. Yet, with the current matrix of parameters, Kuchis are only indirectly prioritized: either as direct victims – which is obviously not acceptable in terms of prevention – or through the ‘non agricultural blockage’ which has a low weighting. Given their mobility, the Kuchis are obviously more difficult for MACCA to integrate in its surveys. Yet, many of the migratory routes of the Kuchis follow regular patterns and are known from local populations. Local knowledge could be used to take into account this risk more adequately.

- ❖ **Children fetching wood and scrap metal** – This group is one of the most vulnerable to mine risks, which partly explains the pre-dominance of male children in the victims of mine accidents, something that MACCA has undoubtedly identified. It is also a category difficult to integrate in a parameter matrix, which has to be based on criteria relatively easy to measure in the field. Yet, this group should be very high in the priorities of MACCA and their vulnerability to mines should be addressed through as many ways as possible. That includes MRE (see below), but including this in the priority matrix may be another one. Communities are aware of the practices of their young boys and could be a conduit for the identification of such practices.

### 4.2 Linking Analysis with programming

**A second element evidencing the real strength of MACCA at linking its data and its programming is the Ottawa request extension prepared by the organisation<sup>31</sup>.** The Extension request required a careful analysis of existing data and a challenging exercise of planning. MACCA and UNMAS worked in particular on calculating a yearly target for demining – and needed budget – based on a series of difficult estimation including:

- Updated estimation of the remaining AP mines in the country;
- Productivity rate of IP teams,

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<sup>31</sup> The Ottawa treaty, also referred to as the Anti-Personnel Mines Ban Treaty, was adopted in 1997 by countries aiming at eliminating anti-personnel land mines. When a state becomes party to the treaty, it is required to clear all its mined areas within 10 years. Afghanistan joined in 2003 but asked for an extension at the end of the 10-year deadline for another 10 years, pushing the deadline to 2023. The treaty text is available at <http://www.un.org/Depts/mine/UNDocs/bantrty.htm>.

- Costs per square metres cleared,
- Decreasing funding available

From a donor perspective, and more generally, the extension request and the 10-year workplan that was created should be seen as a real achievement, as much as an evidence of the superior capacities that the organisation has developed in terms of data analysis and planning. It provides donors with a detailed view of the funding needs of the programme over ten years – something hardly any humanitarian organisation can propose. It also sets up clear targets for the MAPA to achieve, something that was lacking until the work plan and make it more difficult for the donors to measure the achievements of the organisation against their set targets. The document and the methodology used by MACCA and UNMAS to develop it are now seen as models that can and have been replicated in other countries that want to request an extension (South Sudan for example), clearly proving the standards that MACCA was able to reach with that document.

These two aspects of MACCA’s work over the past 5 years (informed programming and the treaty extension) are evidence of the clear impact of MACCA over the MAPA. They show the key strengths of the organisation:

- Constant search for updated and reliable data
- Strong internal mechanisms of consultation and discussions
- Flexibility to integrate lessons learned into programming and strategy rapidly

**All these strengths are crucial for the MAPA to be:**

**Relevant** – Addressing first the needs of the most vulnerable to mine-related risks

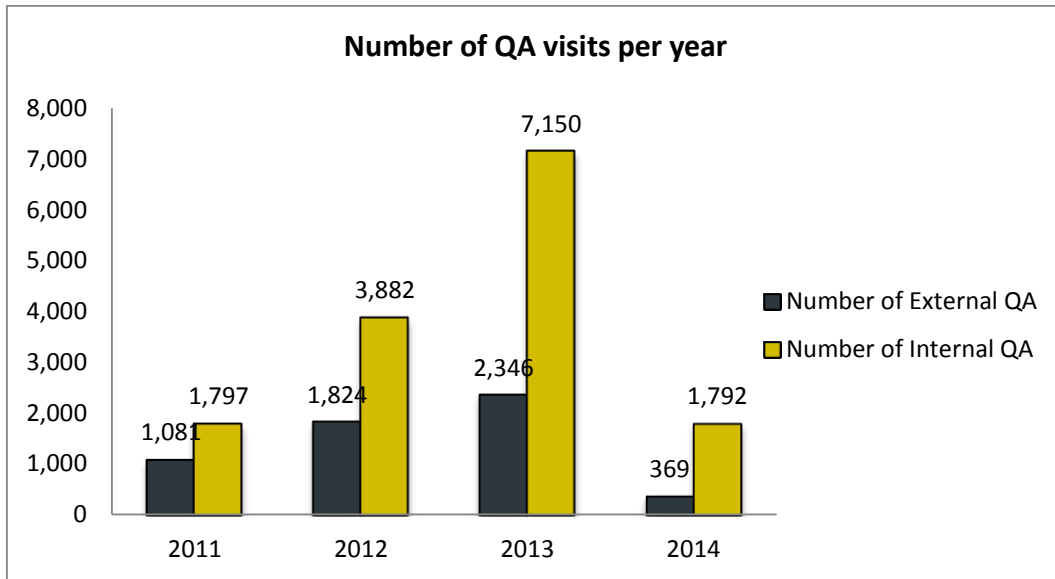
**Efficient** – Mobilizing resources rapidly and constantly monitoring progress with IPs to complete targets

**Effective** - Producing reliable data and analysis on mine risks as the only way to allocate resources efficiently in a context where baseline information is very weak.

**Increasing the quality of the services delivered by the MAPA**

Quality management is another area on which the work of MACCA has a direct impact and is recognised by most stakeholders of the MAPA as central. The QM department has an impact on the quality of the services delivered at various stages of the process:

- ❖ **Standardisation of processes for the MAPA** – Based on international norms, MACCA has developed a series of standards – the Afghan Mine Action Standards – covering the whole range of key procedures for mine action. These standards are reviewed and updated on a constant basis, based on the feedback from IPs and from the field. The AMAS form the common ground on which each and every actor of the MAPA is required to stand and offer a good basis for the QM department to perform its monitoring and evaluation visits, as field teams, MACCA regional offices and IPs are monitored against them.
- ❖ **Monitoring and Evaluation** – As mentioned previously, the QM department conducts regular field visits to monitor the ongoing work. The QM department is in charge of both internal monitoring (MACCA internal procedures) and external monitoring (other actors of the MAPA), with the aim of identifying potential practices that do not conform to the AMAS. Most IPs noted that the process was very open and positive and led to MACCA discussing areas for improvement with them.



Graph 6: Number of QA visits per year and type of visits (2011-2014)<sup>32</sup>

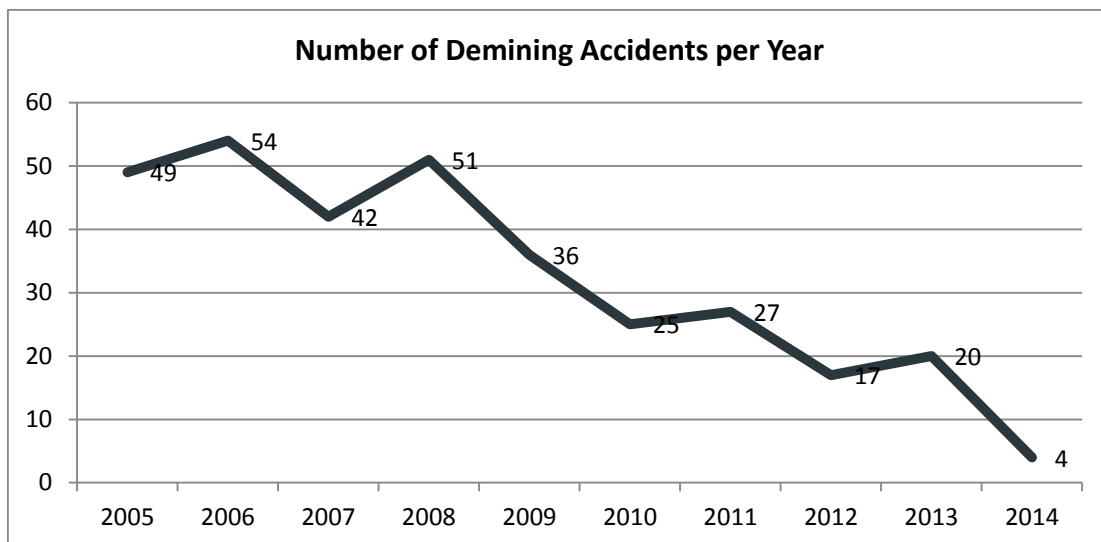
The increased focus on internal QA is indeed visible in Graph 6, particularly in 2013 where more than 7,150 internal QA procedures took place. The decrease in the number of external QAs is particularly visible after 2012, when it went down from about 3,500 to approximately 2,000. The results of these QA visits are entered into IMSMA and used for the Balanced Scorecards (BSC) described above. The QM department participates in common meetings such as the proposal review meetings, making it all the more important for IPs to comply with standards and get high scores on the BSC.

Field observations showed that QA processes are welcomed by the IPs and MACCA staff in the field, as they all see these as basis for discussions and improvement, rather than a 'punitive' process. Many of the IPs mentioned the importance of this open dialogue with MACCA and of the technical support they get from the organisation for their daily work. More specifically, most linked explicitly the QA procedures with the increased quality of their work, proving the impact that MACCA can have directly in the field through its procedures.

- *"The partnership with MACCA is very useful. When we report to MACCA regional office and they identify problems, they always suggest ways to correct those and help us out."* KII – IP Field Staff
- *"MACCA is very cooperative with us. They respond quickly and share information. They also do the auditing of IPs from time to time, which improves greatly our work."* KII – IP Field Staff

- ❖ **Investigating Demining Accidents** is another crucial function of the QM department, especially as the number of demining accidents had been pointed out by evaluations in 2008/09 as an area where the organisation could improve. The QM department is in charge of investigating the accidents. Since 2008, demining accidents have been included in the BSC, helping to raise the awareness and attention of IPs about this issue. This renewed attention to the problem of accidents has borne its fruits as the number of demining accidents is steadily decreasing year after year from above 50 per year before 2008 to around 20 per year in 2012-13:

<sup>32</sup> MACCA records data based on the Afghan year. The data for 2014 only represents the number of QA visits from April 2014 to July 2014.



Graph 7: Number of demining accidents per year<sup>33</sup>

***“A deminer’s first mistake is his last mistake.”*** Current Deminer in Kabul, 50

The decrease in the number of demining accidents can be partly linked to the decrease in the number of mines found, as both follow a same pattern, with a relative peak in 2008 and a steady decrease until 2013. Yet, the data also shows that MACCA was able to keep a low number of demining accidents per deminer in spite of the evolution in the number of deminers active in the field, suggesting that procedures to prevent accidents have borne their fruits. **The number of accidents per deminer went down from 0.78% in 2008 to 0.42% in 2013.**

**This evaluation confirms the impact of MACCA, in particular through its planning and programming department as well as its very thorough QA procedures, on the relevance, quality and efficiency of the mine action services provided by all the actors of the MAPA, something that a direct relationship between IPs and donors could never replace.**

## 5. SUSTAINABILITY, THE ACHILLES’ HEEL OF MACCA?

Of the main evaluation criteria followed by the present evaluation, sustainability is the most problematic when it comes to evaluating MACCA’s work.

In its current format – and with a budget of 9 Million USD allocated to coordination last year<sup>34</sup> – MACCA has little chance to survive without continuous and substantial external funding. The success of MACCA is based on the skills, capacities and commitment of its national staff. One of the main threats to the sustainability of the organisation is the willingness for donors to keep on supporting the salaries of MACCA staff. This staff is paid at UN level and a transfer of the structure under governmental authority could entail an exodus of MACCA’s core staff.

Here as well, MACCA may be the victim of some of its successes: experienced and qualified staff is enough of a rare resource for it to be costly and precious in the current Afghan context. On the other

<sup>33</sup> MACCA data – data for 2014 is recorded up until May 2014.

<sup>34</sup> UNMAS data – breakdown of VTF funds, KII UNMAS Staff.

hand, the transition process was started too late to offer a realistic way to guarantee the sustainability of the institution.

The question of the sustainability of MACCA can be analysed differently taking into account the two following dimensions:

- ❖ Sustainability has to be understood differently for a programme that is due to disappear when the country is mine-free or, at least, that is due to scale down considerably until the residual risk can be managed by a less ambitious organisation.
- ❖ The skills and capacities built within MACCA are transversal and easily transferrable to countless sectors where the country needs and lacks either information management, analytical skills or the organisational smartness that MACCA has demonstrated. State institutions like the CSO or the MIS within governmental departments are far behind what the staff of MACCA can produce and guarantee. For MACCA to be sustainable – and to ensure that useful skills are used in a country where the lack is blatant – it may need to look beyond the MAPA.

## B. Mine action activities – Uneven Achievements

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### KEY FINDINGS

#### Demining: Increased productivity and relevance

- The MAPA was characterised by an **increased productivity of demining activities**, especially over the past two years, allowing the programme to reach its yearly targets, despite a decrease in funding. This should be seen as a real achievement given that deminers had to operate in a deteriorating security environment. This increase in productivity is linked to the introduction of new technologies in demining over the past two years as well as the competitive process introduced amongst IPs.
- Over the same period, **the MAPA had to revise its targets** (see table 4 below). The main reason for that is the discovery of new hazards along the way and the necessity to revise baseline data on the scope of work regularly. The lack of funding also impacts MAPA's ability to reach its objectives, as some IP teams cannot be mobilised due to the lack of funding. At this stage, not all actors in the regions see the 2023 deadline as feasible, in particular in the South and the East.
- **The development of community-based demining (CBD) projects was a success during this period**, allowing demining organisations to access more insecure and remote areas than in the past. This evaluation found that the CBD approach had no significant impact on safety. Still, a lot more non-conformity reports per project were recorded for the CBD approach, as adequately monitored by the QM department through its external QA visits, calling for an adjustment of training of this kind of projects.
- **The humanitarian impact of demining activities is visible in the decrease of civilian casualties over the past years**. The impact of demining on development has been better documented through Land and Livelihood assessments in the past years, but, so far, MACCA has not succeeded in quantifying it precisely.

#### MRE: High relevance but uncertain impact on practices

- **MRE activities have targeted in priority young boys, in line with the needs**, as this category is one of the most vulnerable to mine risks. Women and girls were adequately included in the MRE effort, even though a lot of women in the communities keep receiving MRE only indirectly.
- **Community-based MRE and MRE through schools are the most sustainable methods** but direct MRE can be relevant in cases of emergency.
- **The impact of MRE is difficult to assess**. While this evaluation confirmed past results about a satisfactory level of awareness of beneficiaries, changes in behaviour – especially for young boys – remain difficult to achieve, in light of the socio-economic pressure young boys are often subjected to.

## VA: Limited achievements but increasing interest

- As in other contexts, **VA activities have received less attention than other components of mine action in Afghanistan**. Still, a consistent effort of technical assistance and advocacy with the two line ministries is to put to MACCA's credit over the period.
- VA activities remained relatively marginal until last year, **but MACCA is addressing this gap and has conducted an in-depth situational analysis** to identify the needs and priority actions for each of the components of VA, a welcome initiative that should bear fruits rapidly.

### 1. CLEARANCE ACTIVITIES

#### 1.1 Achievements of the MAPA between 2008 and 2014

MAPA's gains with regards to clearance have been considerable, to say the least. Demining in Afghanistan started in 1989, at which time there were 26,710 recorded minefields covering 92% of districts; 25 years later, **80.7% of the problem has been resolved** with a current tally of 4,323 minefields covering 521.9 square kilometres<sup>35</sup>. Yet, measuring success and communicating about it is not as easy as it seems given the changes in the number of known hazards, in the framework establishing targets and in the modes of identification of hazards.

Until 2013 and the extension request, the MAPA did not have yearly targets to refer to, making it more difficult for evaluators to measure success. The following table gives an overview of the targets the programme had during the period under review:

Table 4: Demining targets and State of Completion (2008-2014)

MILESTONES & OBJECTIVES OF THE MAPA (Demining)		
Treaties	Targets	State of Completion
Afghan Compact & Afghan National Development Strategy (2006-08)	All stockpiled anti-personnel mines located and destroyed by 2008	√
	By March 2011, land area contaminated by mines and unexploded ordnance will be reduced by 70%	Exceeded vs. baseline data but discovery of new hazards made it impossible to reach the target
	By the end of 2010, all unsafe, unserviceable and surplus ammunition will be destroyed.	X
Ottawa Convention - 2003 (Pre-extension)	Clear all emplaced anti-personnel mines by 1 <sup>st</sup> of March 2013	X

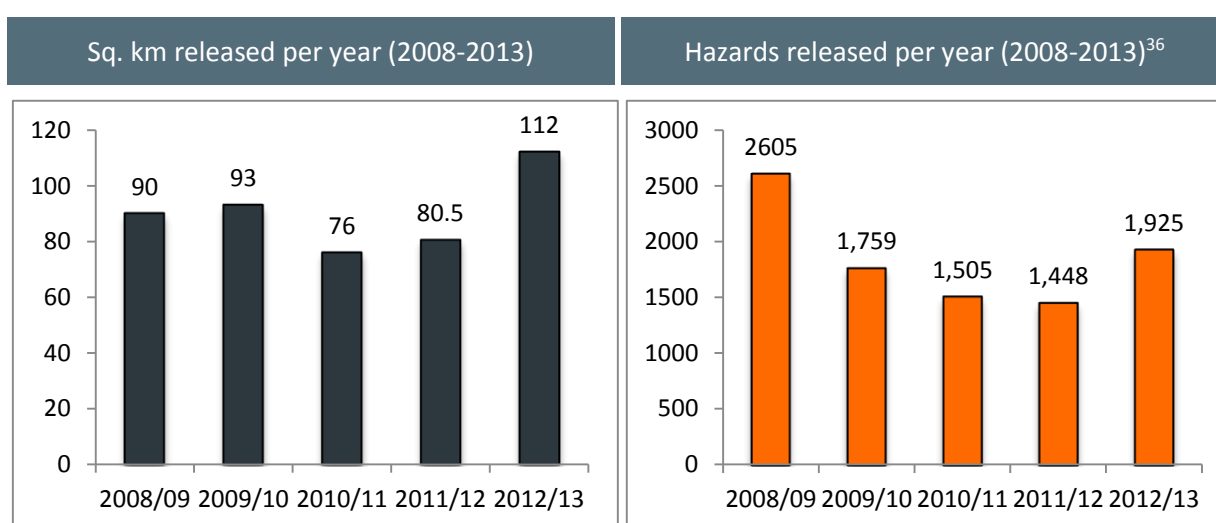
<sup>35</sup> Data MACCA (2014)



Milestones in the 10-year Workplan for the Extension Request – 2013	Clear 43.93 square kilometres of AP MF, 18.65 square kilometres of AT MF and 14.5 square kilometres of BF in 2013	√
Ottawa Convention - 2013 (Post-extension)	Clear all emplaced anti-personnel mines by 1 <sup>st</sup> of March 2023	?

As mentioned above, one of the achievements of MACCA over the period has been to improve the quality of its data and knowledge about the scope of the problem, discovering new hazards along the way. For example, the ongoing MEIFCS survey has led to the addition of 39 square kilometres of contaminated areas to MACCA database, further changing the targets and expanding the scope of the problem. Furthermore, with an ongoing conflict and the withdrawal of international military forces, new challenges are appearing, such as firing ranges.

The following graphs provide an overview of the yearly achievements of the programme since 2008:



**Graph 8: Demining yearly achievements (2008-2013)**

Differences in achievements across years are explained by the different levels of funding the MAPA was able to access, as well as the technological progress that the organisation successfully integrated. In particular, the Front End Loader (FEL) and the Rotary Mine Comb (RMC) machines for demining and the minelab detectors for anti-tank mines, introduced over the past years, had a significant impact on the productivity of demining teams. As a result, the productivity of demining activities increased significantly over the past two years, allowing the MAPA to reach and even exceed its targets: last year, the MAPA was able to clear a larger area than planned with slightly over 10% in funding decrease, 71.7 Million USD rather than the required 80 Million<sup>37</sup>, and in the context of a general downsizing of the organisation.

**The effectiveness of the demining component of the programme is therefore improving**, something confirmed by MACCA and various IPs who have seen the cost per square metre cleared decrease, sometimes significantly<sup>38</sup>. An estimation provided by MACCA of the average cost per square metre in the MAPA confirms this improvement in recent years:

<sup>36</sup> MACCA Annual Reports (1387 to 1391).

<sup>37</sup> MACCA Data, 2014

<sup>38</sup> Key Informant Interview with a MACCA HQ staff member and IP HQ staff member

Table 5: Average cost of demining per sq. metre (2008-14)<sup>39</sup>

Year	Cost per sq. metre	Year	Cost per sq. metre
2008	NA	2011	1.30
2009	1.12	2012	0.99
2010	1.34	2013	0.89

Yet, it is important to remember that these costs can vary significantly between IPs, especially between national and international organisations and that the reduction of costs per square metre cannot be pushed indefinitely. Going below 1 USD per square metre for international IPs may be very difficult and involve cutting costs on what makes their added value (e.g. gender policy, impact assessments etc.). Some IPs have already made considerable efforts - such as downsizing<sup>40</sup> - to reduce their costs of operations and others are at risk of shutting down their whole operation<sup>41</sup>.

▪ **Regional Achievements**

In the four different areas visited by the field team, **the clearing process had managed to clear more than 65% of the total contaminated areas**. Depending on the region visited however, people were more or less confident in meeting the mine-free target of 2023. In the West for example, the 2023 deadline seemed realistic as IPs had sufficient funding for Herat<sup>42</sup> (more than 14.5 Million USD over the next five years<sup>43</sup>), while in Kandahar IPs and MACCA field staff were less confident that the 2023 deadline could be achieved. They indicated that 2025 might be a more realistic timeline given the unstable working environment they have to work in<sup>44</sup> and the fact that the 2023 deadline was decided based on a partial survey that did not cover all of the country<sup>45</sup>. The same concerns were raised in the East.

Area	Contaminated square kilometres	Cleared square kilometres	Remaining square kilometres to clear
East	177	146 (82.5%)	31
West	317.9	247.5 (77.8%)	78.3
South	567.14	429.14 (75.7%)	138
Central/South East	365.9	246.18 (67.3%)	119.72

Table 6: Minefield clearance achievements by area visited

39 The average cost per square metre is an indicator difficult to measure, as costs vary significantly depending on how remote and difficult a contaminated area is. This should be seen as indicative only.

40 Key Informant Interview with an IP staff member

41 Key Informant Interview with a UNMAS staff member

42 <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/uk-aid-to-ensure-that-afghanistans-herat-province-is-landmine-free-by-2018>

43 <http://www.halotrust.org/media-centre/news-press-releases/mine-awareness-day-halo-afghanistan>

44 Field Debrief with Team Leader

45 Case Study with a Current Deminer

- **The development of Community Based Demining**

**A key evolution of demining activities over the period is the strong development of community-based demining in the country.** This approach was developed in 1387 (2008) to get around the problems of insecurity and low access that the MAPA was facing. The number of CBD teams increased from 17 in 2008 to 131 in 2010. In 2013, 10 projects were community-based against 88 ‘traditional’ projects. The principle of community-based projects is to hire deminers from the actual area that needs to be cleared rather than bringing ‘core staff’ of deminers from elsewhere. The rationale is twofold: firstly it prevents the beneficiaries from seeing the deminers as outsiders and potentially distrusting them and secondly, it enables the IP to hire men who will in turn help financially a large group of direct and indirect relatives, thus linking demining efforts to a better economic situation in the area. CBD projects minimise the risk of criminal or insurgent activity that regularly affect the MAPA. This community-based approach is most notably used in Kandahar<sup>46</sup> for example, but not in Herat where HALO Trust (HT) is very active. In light of the recent killing of HT staff members<sup>47</sup>, one can wonder if this IP has suffered more because of this difference in approach or if it is simply due to its larger size and image in Herat and the West.

**The impact of the CBD approach is very clear as it allowed the clearance of districts that would have been out of reach for traditional deminers.** This represents an important step for the relevance of the programme, which is increasingly able to access some of the most vulnerable communities in remote and insecure areas through this approach, like in Kandahar province. Given the increasing level of insecurity in the country – sadly taking its toll on deminers as well – and decreasing access as well as the need for livelihood, especially in remote areas, relying on this type of approaches is undoubtedly relevant and may become even more useful in the coming years. Yet, and somehow surprisingly, given the level of reflexivity that usually characterize MACCA, the analysis of the impact that the CBD approach may have on the quality of services delivered, on the costs, on the productivity and on the safety of demining activities is relatively weak. The following table compares the CBD approach to the ‘core’ approach on some key indicators<sup>48</sup>:

INDICATORS	CBD Demining	Traditional Demining
# of demining accidents 2008-2014	17	161
Total # of teams (2008 to 2010) and projects (2011-2014)	223 teams; 32 projects	605 teams; 191 projects
# of missed mines reported over the past 5 years <sup>49</sup>	0	10
# of non-conformity reports (internal QA) since 2011	108	753
Average # of non-conformity reports (internal QA) per project since 2011	3.38 (108/32)	3.94 (753/191)
# of non-conformity reports (external QA) since 2011	116	247
Average # of non-conformity reports (external QA) per project since 2011	3.63 (116/32)	0.33 (247/191)

Table 7 : Comparison between CBD and non-CBD projects

<sup>46</sup> Focus Group Discussion with Men in Kandahar

<sup>47</sup> <http://af.reuters.com/article/worldNews/idAFKBN0FF0W620140710>

<sup>48</sup> Based on MACCA QA data broken down by type of projects and KIIs

<sup>49</sup> Year of discovery or accident linked to the missed mine – clearance could have taken place years ago. Missed mines could still be found for CBD projects in the future.

As shown in the above table, the shift towards community-based demining did not cause an important increase in major safety issues as both demining accidents and missed mines remain low and proportionally comparable to traditional demining projects. A large share of the demining accidents that took place during CBD projects is related to one particular project in Khost in 2010, where a lot of accidents happened but where the demining conditions were particularly difficult<sup>50</sup>. Overall it is a positive finding to see that CBD projects do not impact the safety of deminers, although one lesson learned from a project like the one in Khost should be that experienced deminers should be sent to demine particularly difficult areas.

Yet, there is a notable ten-fold difference between the average number of external non-conformity reports per CBD projects and the one for traditional projects, as seen in table 7. This is an indication that less experienced and newly trained deminers are less likely to conform to the vast range of standards that MACCA has designed. This high number of non-conformity reports is also an indication that the QM department kept a close eye on the way CBD teams worked on the ground and were able to catch a lot of the problems they saw. The organisation should keep track of these differences by breaking down data by community-based vs. traditional projects to monitor these trends; and identify the particular areas where community-based projects show higher levels of non-conformity to address these in priority.

Lessons learned from the CBD approach still need to be drawn at the organisation level. Yet, some initial observations can be made, based on KILs:

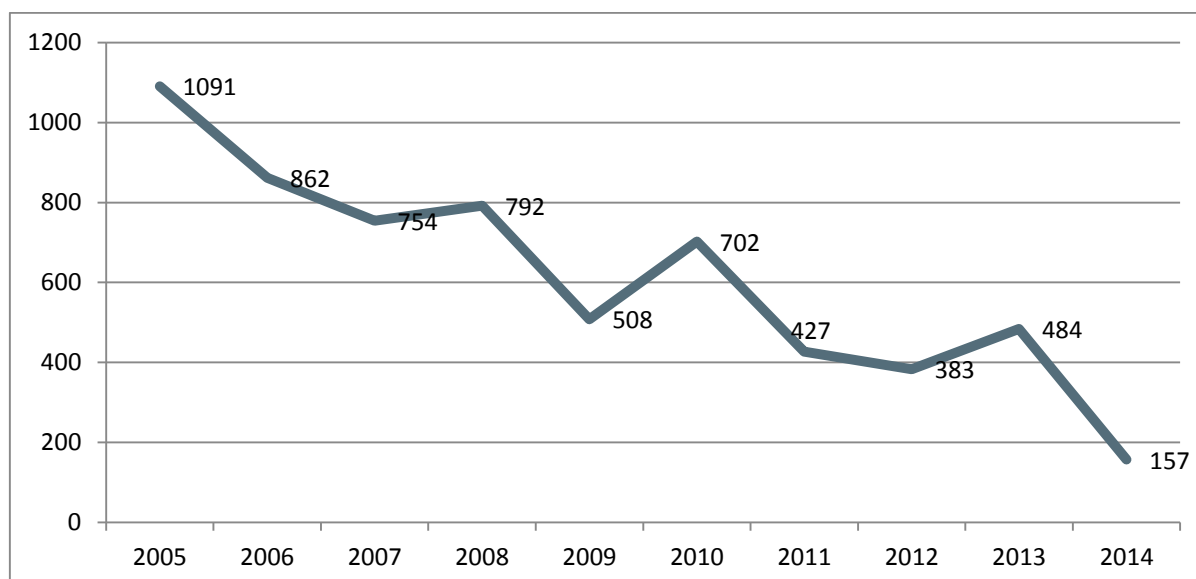
STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Communities’ commitment to demine their own land</li> <li>✓ Increased access for the MAPA and inclusion of remote areas</li> <li>✓ Increased security</li> <li>✓ Significant economic fallout on the communities targeted</li> <li>✓ Easier logistics</li> <li>✓ Comparable safety</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Additional costs (mobilisation and training period)</li> <li>✓ Higher number of external non-conformity reports</li> <li>✓ Unintended effects:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Voluntary delays to postpone the end of a project</li> <li>○ Sensitivity and local power games surrounding recruitment</li> <li>○ Preference of communities for CBD projects may decrease acceptance of ‘traditional’ demining teams</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

**1.2 Impact of demining activities**

**Humanitarian Impact - A direct impact of mine clearance activities is the drop in civilian casualties, a significant humanitarian accomplishment for the MAPA.** Aside from a spike in 2001 due to a higher presence of UXOs from aerial bombardments and to the massive movement of returns of Afghan refugees in contaminated areas, the number of deaths went from 100 a month in the late 1990s and early 2000s to an average of 39 a month nowadays<sup>51</sup> (which is still the highest rate in the world). Even if still high, these numbers appear to be well below the radar of the international community for this situation to be considered worthy of immediate and strong financial involvement<sup>52</sup>.

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<sup>50</sup> Key Informant Interview with a MACCA staff. In particular noted a high concentration of mines.  
<sup>51</sup> MACCA, (2014), An Overview of Mine Action in Afghanistan, slide 8  
<sup>52</sup> Key Informant Interview with a UNMAS staff member



Graph 9: Number of civilian victims of mine-related accidents per year<sup>53</sup>

**A certain but yet to be measured impact on development** – Demining activities have an important impact on local communities as well as on the Afghan society as a whole. Yet, as noted by past evaluations, measuring this impact remains difficult for an organisation like MACCA. Since the 2008 evaluations, MACCA has made a few attempts at measuring this impact through Land and Livelihood assessments conducted between 2010 and 2012 in various provinces of the country. Typically these assessments found that demining had a significant impact on local economies through a series of effects including:

- ❖ The rapid return of cleared land to rightful land owners;
- ❖ Productive opportunities and freed assets including
  - Gardening
  - Grazing
  - Collecting wood, stone, sand and soil;
- ❖ Building of houses and other community buildings
- ❖ Cleared land for infrastructure, factories, markets or shops;
- ❖ Reduced costs linked to victim assistance (medical costs)<sup>54</sup>

### 1.3 Remaining Challenges and Work plan

It is Important to say that despite years of successful demining programming, the challenge is still daunting and will only be achieved with a substantial and reliable support from donors. As of April 2014, the remaining known hazards mean that the MAPA still has to clear:

- 517.4 square kilometres of area contaminated
- 4,299 hazards
- 223.5 square kilometres of firing ranges and 42 hazards related to these
- 1,632 communities affected
- 259 districts contaminated<sup>55</sup>

Thanks to the important effort of planning conducted by MACCA to prepare the extension request, this remaining challenge has been broken down based on the priorities examined above and will be

<sup>53</sup> For 2014, only covers until May 2014.

<sup>54</sup> MACCA, NRI and GICHD, (2011), Livelihoods Analysis of landmine affected communities in Afghanistan. p. 3-4

<sup>55</sup> MACCA Data, April 2014

addressed through a very detailed 10-year work plan. The MAPA faces four main obstacles in its quest for a mine-free country:

- **Difficulty in obtaining funds** – Throughout the years, the lack of funding has been one of the main factors decreasing the productivity of the MAPA as a whole. Many IPs have the capacity to mobilise teams quickly on the ground upon allocation of a project or if they receive bilateral funding. Even if decreasing funding has been integrated in the calculations for the 10-year work plan, this factor is likely to be the key in the success or failure of the MAPA to meet its treaty obligations in the future.
- **Insecurity** – Despite its high level of acceptance the MAPA is not immune to security incidents, far from it. While deminers benefit from a very high image in the overall population – a finding of past studies confirmed in the field by the present evaluation – they may still be considered to be too close from foreigners or easy targets for kidnappings. Increasing levels of insecurity are likely to close access to difficult provinces, especially in the South, East and South-East (ex: Farah, Paktia, Nuristan etc.).
- **Technical challenges** - To a lesser extent, some technical challenges still make it difficult for some demining teams to reach the level of productivity they are aiming for. Amongst the most commonly cited by the deminers interviewed for this evaluation were the increasing depth of old mines that makes them difficult to detect below 20 centimetres, the fact that other mines also move in the ground and the pressure plate ends up facing elsewhere that towards the top, endangering the manual detection process, as well as soil erosion<sup>56</sup> and natural disasters responsible for the displacement of some minefields.
- **Addition of hazardous areas to the database** - In addition to these three main issues, adding old but newly identified hazardous areas into the database is another obstacle to achieving the 10 year plan.

### Talking to Deminers

When speaking to current deminers employed in 4 different IPs across the country, we are able to see that the job is not a vocation as such, and many individuals are recruited into demining in order to receive a salary and deal with their lack of skills other than farming and mechanics that most of them possess. The relatively easy entry process (courses last between 20 and 45 days in total) enables newly trained deminers to quickly start clearing an area in a community. Most of them highlight the particular difficulties of dealing with AP mines<sup>57</sup>, along with the challenges that working in insecure areas bring such as facing different types of insurgents – some understanding of their positive work and others unhappy of their supposed links with foreigners<sup>58</sup>. The image they have amongst populations is very good and they are held in high esteem because they are seen as conducting a Jihad<sup>59</sup>.

For past deminers, it is very interesting to note the absence of grudges towards the organisations that employed them. All respondents interviewed seemed to have parted ways cordially, usually because a project ended and a large number of people had to be let go<sup>60</sup>. This decreases the concerns about the socio-economic impact of the series of downsizings the MAPA went through and

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<sup>56</sup> MACCA-West Presentation, slide 18

<sup>57</sup> Case Study with a Current Deminer in Herat

<sup>58</sup> Case Study with a Current Deminer in Kabul

<sup>59</sup> Case Study with a Past Deminer in Nangarhar

<sup>60</sup> Case Studies with Past Deminers in Kabul, Kandahar and Nangarhar

will continue to go through. **It is also encouraging for the future of mine action in Afghanistan and suggests that, from a do-no-harm point of view, the MAPA has not triggered unintended consequences.** There are at least no indications that this large workforce that has been downsized might one day turn against its former employer given that IPs have done a great job at maintaining cordial relations with their staff and explaining that their work is project based and funding is irregular.

## 2. MINE RISK EDUCATION

### 2.1 Achievements since 2008

For MRE, the results have also been impressive over the last years with millions of men, women and children having received information on hazards across the country. Since 2008, more than 6.5 Million people have received MRE with a relatively constant focus on boys, who represent on average 43% of the MRE beneficiaries over the period:

TYPE OF BENEFICIARIES	# of Beneficiaries (2008-2013)	% of the total beneficiaries (2008-2013)
Girls	1,740,001	27%
Boys	2,714,582	43%
Women	933,009	15%
Men	967,419	15%

Table 8: Number and Percentage of Beneficiaries of MRE per year and category

Over the past two years of the period though (2012 and 2013), the number of beneficiaries of MRE decreases by about 40% from its former level, from more than 1.1 Million beneficiaries to slightly less than 700,000 across the country. This decrease can be linked to the funding, as the breakdown of the VTF funding shows that over the past two years, victim assistance got a higher share of funding from the VTF. In absolute terms, the funding from the VTF dedicated to MRE dropped by about 75% between 2011 and 2012, from 1.4 Million USD to 370,000.

The over-representation of boys in the beneficiaries shows that the MRE targets its beneficiaries adequately, as male children constantly represent the main group of victims of mine-related accidents over the period.

**The repartition between male and female beneficiaries over the period is of 58% versus 42%, which indicates an over-representation of women and girls if compared to the repartition between male and female victims.** However, it is an achievement of the programme to have been able to include such a proportion of women and girls, and women need to be informed as the prime carer of the children. This is also important as past studies have shown that the level of information women could access was low, meaning also a certain level of anxiety linked to an imprecise knowledge of the risks. Integrating women in MRE can be challenging in certain provinces though: a) IPs reported that it is difficult to find women who are skilled enough and able to travel around the province, as the job requires; b) MRE for women is usually taught at the clinic and the programme may only target women who already have a certain degree of freedom of movement. In the Southern region for example, keeping the balance is more difficult and the programme reports 29% female beneficiaries vs. 71% male beneficiaries there.

### 3 types of MRE

MRE is provided in Afghanistan through 3 main channels:

- ❖ **Direct implementation through the IPs:** usually delivered by a married couple (one man; one woman) who go from village to village to organise the MRE session. Women would usually be taught at the clinic or health centre while men would be gathered at the mosque. Direct MRE was also provided in priority to returnees at the encashment centre of the UNHCR. This mode of MRE is considered to be less sustainable and efficient than the 2 other forms of MRE.
- ❖ **Community-based MRE:** the 2008-2013 MAPA strategy put the emphasis on the various ways to develop community-based MRE, through the training of influential community members and community liaison mechanisms. These mechanisms were found to be the “most sustainable element of MRE efforts in Afghanistan” according to a 2012 evaluation of this component of MRE<sup>61</sup>.
- ❖ **Partnership with existing institutions:** Working in particular through the Ministry of Education, the MAPA is able to target large number of children as MRE has been successfully added to the national curriculum. MRE sessions are provided to the teachers through the teachers who have been trained by MACCA, an IP or the Child Protection Officer of local DoEs. Another partnership is with the Ministry of Hajj and Religious Affairs through which over 4,000 Mullah Imams have been trained to conduct mine/ERW risk education. Training is conducted at the U.A.E.-funded Imam Training Centre in Kabul.

## 2.2 Impact of MRE

*‘The impact of MRE is difficult to measure because risk behaviours are not a one time output but rather a series of decisions and actions that are perpetually influenced by a range of risk determinants’<sup>62</sup>.* The fieldwork conducted for this evaluation confirmed the findings of the 2012 evaluation, showing that adjusting MRE messages and delivery is not easy.

Like in 2012, focus groups showed that men, women and children had a basic understanding of the main risks associated to mines, knew how to recognise a contaminated area and, in most cases, knew what to do if they found a mine. What to do in case someone is injured was less clear as most respondents would go to help the injured. Examples from focus group discussions show the lack of full MRE knowledge and include:

- Personally transporting unexploded ordnance to the IP in the area<sup>63</sup>
- Assisting a person who has been injured in an hazardous area<sup>64</sup>

The link between awareness and behaviour is not direct and many factors can push a person to knowingly take a risk. Some children were able to articulate that link and considered that the MRE they had received had had an impact on their behaviour:

*“When we saw the pictures, we got more information and now, we neither touch mines nor we play with them. We know that mines are dangerous and if we touch them, they will explode. In the past, we played with them and some of them exploded next to us; now we*

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<sup>61</sup> Samuel Hall (2012), Community Based Approaches for Improving MRE and Perceptions of Deminers, p. 3

<sup>62</sup> Idem. p. 24

<sup>63</sup> Focus Group Discussion with Men in the West

<sup>64</sup> Focus Group Discussion with Children in the East



*have more information about them and we never touch them. They are very dangerous and if we put our feet over them or touch them, they will explode and injure or kill us.”*

FGD Children – Kandahar Province

Still, this issue remains one of the most important weaknesses reducing the actual impact on the ground of mine risk education for children. The 2012 evaluation identified the main reason for the behaviour explaining that children in particular would take this kind of risks knowing the potential consequences:

- ❖ **Economic desperation driving intentional risk-taking<sup>65</sup>:** Even though young beneficiaries receive MRE both in school and through some IPs, they still fetch wood and/or scrap metal in the hills surrounding their village<sup>66</sup>. This is due to the fact that in rural Afghanistan, children are often expected to contribute financially to the family for additional sources of income. As such they regularly explore the surrounding areas for valuable items for reselling and for the house even though these still need to be demined. They know about the dangers incurred, yet still enter these areas, and civilian casualty numbers show that almost half are incurred by children (mostly boys)<sup>67</sup>. Grazing livestock, collecting firewood and collecting metal are the top motivations of children for entering mined areas<sup>68</sup>. Focus groups conducted for the present evaluation pointed at the same factors. This long-standing practice<sup>69</sup> needs to be addressed if MRE is to have a tangible impact amongst children, which villagers everywhere say should be targeted first.

### 2.3 Issues affecting the efficiency of MRE

Some issues affecting the proper implementation of MRE in the districts are the obvious security challenges, the dwindling funds that push IPs to work with a wider pool of volunteers rather than paid staff in order to relay new information<sup>70</sup> and finally, training tools (posters, leaflets, etc.) used in schools that degrade rapidly and need to be constantly renewed by MACCA<sup>71</sup>.

At the provincial level, the relationship between MACCA and the DoE seemed to vary significantly in quality. DoE staff raised various concerns affecting the efficiency of the MRE provided through the schools:

- Lack of training kits (posters, leaflets, plastic models) or deteriorated training kits make it more difficult for teachers to explain some of the MRE messages properly to children.
- Turnover within the teaching staff and absence of refresher training meant that high proportions of the teachers who had received the training could have left the school or even changed job. This element is clearly out of the direct control of MACCA but given that institutional MRE is undoubtedly an important – and sustainable – component of MRE, it needs a close monitoring to ensure that standards are also applied within the school system.

MACCA is aware of these issues that would require a very tight monitoring over a large number of schools. Unfortunately, limited resources impact MACCA's ability to do so.

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<sup>65</sup> Samuel Hall (2012), Community Based Approaches for Improving MRE and Perceptions of Deminers, p. 35

<sup>66</sup> Focus Group Discussion with Children in the East, West, South and Centre

<sup>67</sup> MACCA, (2014), An Overview of Mine Action in Afghanistan, slide 9

<sup>68</sup> Samuel Hall (2012), Community Based Approaches for Improving MRE and Perceptions of Deminers, page 2

<sup>69</sup> Key Informant Interview with an IP staff member

<sup>70</sup> Key Informant Interview with an IP staff member in Nangarhar

<sup>71</sup> Key Informant Interview with a Department of Education staff member

### 3. VICTIM ASSISTANCE

#### 3.1 Context of victim assistance

The need for proper mechanisms for victim assistance is striking in a country where the prevalence rate of disability is estimated to be 2.7% by Handicap International (HI)<sup>72</sup>. Estimations vary significantly and go from 52,000 -62,000 mine survivors according to this survey to 150,000 victims recorded by the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs, Martyrs and Disabled (MoLSAMD)<sup>73</sup>. The relevance of VA is therefore not questionable in a country like Afghanistan. Yet, according to the GICHD, while victim assistance is one of the five pillars of mine action, it has traditionally been one of the weakest across the board. *'Of the five components, the mine action community has not paid the same level of attention to victim assistance as it has to others'*<sup>74</sup>. Taking stock of what has been done for victim assistance since 2008 in Afghanistan shows that the MAPA has followed more or less the same trend than the organisation globally. Hardly mentioned in UNMAS' 2006-2010 global strategy, the focus on victim assistance is a lot stronger in the 2013-2018 strategy as one of the strategic objectives of the organisation<sup>75</sup>.

#### Defining Victim Assistance

"In basic terms [victim assistance can be defined] as the care and rehabilitation provided for the immediate and long-term needs of mine victims, their families, and mine affected communities". That includes nine main components: "a) Emergency medical care; b) Continuing medical care; c) Physical rehabilitation, prosthesis and assistive devices; d) Psychological and social support; e) Employment and economic integration; f) Capacity building and sustainability; g) Legislation and public awareness; i) Access to services; j) Data collection."<sup>76</sup>

#### 3.2 Progress of VA since 2008

Despite these caveats, the MAPA made inroads in regards to victim assistance since 2008 in some of the areas mentioned above, in particular physical rehabilitation, continuing medical care and capacity building:

- **Institutional development and support to line ministries (MoLSAMD, Ministry of Public Health (MoPH) and MoE):** MACCA provided constant technical assistance all three ministries over the period, leading to the consolidation of national capacities to deal with disability. That includes:
  - o Establishment of and support to the Disability Support Unit (DSU) within the MoLSAMD
  - o Support to the drafting of the Afghanistan National Disability Action Plan (ANDAP) stating objectives and actions for the period 2008-2011
  - o Establishment of the Disability and Rehabilitation Department within the MoPH
  - o Regular National Disability Workshops and consultations amongst disability stakeholders
  - o Establishment of the Inclusive Education department as part of a new MoE structure
  - o Integration of inclusive education in the MoE National Education Plan
  - o Support to the Inclusive Education department of the MoE in drafting the inclusive education policy.

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<sup>72</sup> HI (2005), NDSA

<sup>73</sup> KII MACCA Staff.

<sup>74</sup> Filippino, E (2002), 'The role of Mine Action in Victim Assistance' in *Journal of Mine Action*, 6.3 for the GICHD.

<sup>75</sup> UNMAS (2013), *The Strategy of the United Nations on Mine Action 2013-2018*, p.14

<sup>76</sup> ICBL, (1999/2000), *Guidelines for the Care and Rehabilitation of survivors*, Working Group on Victim Assistance. Quoted by GICHD, (2002), *The Role of Mine Action in Victim Assistance*, p.12

- **Improving the supply of physiotherapeutic services:** through its technical support and discussions with the MoPH, MACCA supported the integration of disability services and physiotherapy in the Basic Package of Health Services (BPHS), incrementally increasing the supply of these services in the provinces. Through HI and specific fund-raising efforts, MACCA and UNMAS supported the Physiotherapy training institute, helping developing this capacity in a country that cruelly lacks it.
- **Improving coordination on VA:** MACCA established a bi-monthly coordination committee on VA/disability support with key partners, including HI, ICRC, SCA and local NGOs.
- **Various projects implemented by HI, AOAD, DAO, KOO, ALSO and AABRAR:** the main VA IPs implemented a series of projects that included physical rehabilitation, victim data collection, livelihood programmes, ramp construction, psychological counselling and peer support, and advocacy.

**Overall, it is clear that MACCA showed some consistency in the type of activities prioritised for victim assistance and disability support, in particular through the support to government line ministries (MoPH, MoE and MoLSAMD), in line with their strategies and priorities. Yet, in terms of availability of services and on a national scale, there is still much to do for the MAPA to have a real impact on victims, especially given the scope of the problem in Afghanistan.**

### 3.3 Towards a better integration of VA in the MAPA?

A positive development for victim assistance and disability support is the renewed focus that MACCA and UNMAS' management want to put on victim assistance, acknowledging that not enough had been done so far. This renewed impetus is promising and already led to concrete steps taken by MACCA to fully integrate VA in its scope of activities:

- National standards for VA were developed;
- The capacities of the VA department were increased, as it was separated from the MRE department. It now has 5 staff members focusing exclusively on VA.
- More significant perhaps, MACCA went through a large process of consultation and information gathering to build an accurate situational analysis. Data analysis was conducted for each component of VA (e.g. first aid, emergency and continuing medical care, physical rehabilitation, etc.) in order to draw a precise picture of the state of VA-related services in the country to build up an informed strategy for VA. It is very positive to see that MACCA's management is ambitious and willing to produce a strategy for VA that would be as comprehensive, informed and detailed as what the organisation produced for the extension request<sup>77</sup>. This effort will need to be sustained in time, as VA is usually the first to suffer when budget cuts are necessary<sup>78</sup>. Still, the huge effort in planning made for the extension request means that MACCA now has a) the skills and experience; b) more time to focus on other important areas of its mandate, such as VA. **The process is also interactive and the data collected by MACCA on distance of impacted communities to the nearest health centre has already been integrated in its prioritisation system.**

While it is too early for the present research to evaluate the impact that this new interest in VA will have on victims and the provision of services, completing a thorough and large situational analysis is already an important achievement that will need to be translated rapidly into action.

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<sup>77</sup> Key Informant Interview with a MACCA staff member

<sup>78</sup> Key Informant Interview with a UNMAS staff member

## Should MAPA stakeholders provide livelihood support to victims?

Stakeholders pointed to socio-economic reintegration and livelihood interventions as one of the main needs of mines and ERW survivors, explaining why some IPs implemented small livelihood interventions. Yet, many past evaluations have shown that livelihood interventions in Afghanistan very often end up having a very low impact on the access to income and employment of beneficiaries. Numerous organisations have provided sewing and tailoring training to very little benefit. MAPA IPs have limited experience and knowledge about livelihood interventions and the question must be asked as to whether having them directly implementing livelihood interventions is the most efficient way of tackling this issue. Instead, MACCA should reach out to the few actors that have developed robust training and livelihood programmes that have already proven their impact (e.g. HELP in Herat and NRC's YEP in Faryab, Nangarhar and Herat for youth in particular<sup>79</sup>) to advocate for a better integration of survivors in their programme.

### 3.4 Challenges preventing a better integration of the VA in mine action

Yet, the Afghan programme still has to address some of the uncertainties that characterise VA in general, on top of the country-specific challenges:

- **Uncertainties on who the beneficiaries are:** in a country where disabled represent as much as 2.7% of the population according to Handicap International, IPs and MAPA stakeholders on the ground are not clear on whether their target population should be the victims of mines or disabled populations in general.

“This section of MAPA is very weak here in this region. It is because we don't directly deal with the disabilities of mines but with other types of disabilities that occurred not due to mines. It is not our main work”. KII MACCA Sub Office - Kandahar

- **Uncertainties about what the exact role of mine action stakeholders should be** in regards to VA, as a large part of VA-related activities is to work with national line ministries, in particular the Ministry of Public Health (MoPH) and the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs, Martyrs and Disabled (MoLSAMD). VA is more complicated to mainstream given the need for greater collaboration with external government institutions. In a country where governmental capacities are very low, this is undoubtedly challenging.
- Furthermore, the **large span of activities** linked to VA (from emergency activity, to advocacy or livelihood assistance) means that MAPA stakeholders are perhaps less equipped than when working within the silo of demining per se.
- **Insecurity and poor access to victims** also limit the MAPA's efficiency in that regards. Some actors noted that one of the weaknesses of VA is its limited coverage. Most of the activities are concentrated in Kabul and some provincial capitals and it is often difficult for victims to afford reaching out to these services.

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<sup>79</sup> Samuel Hall (2014), Evaluation of the NRC Youth Education Pack Projects in Afghanistan: <http://samuelhall.org/REPORTS/Evaluation%20of%20the%20NRC%20Youth%20Education%20Pack%20Projects%20in%20Afghanistan.pdf>

## C. Gender and environment mainstreaming

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### KEY FINDINGS

- In spite of a few measures introduced between 2008 and 2013, including the identification of a gender focal point for mine action, the effort to mainstream gender in the MAPA had remained limited and slow. In 2013, the general level of understanding of the concept of gender and what it entailed in terms of programming remained limited.
- 2012-13 saw a shift with a large review of gender considerations in the MAPA that led to the articulation of a precise gender strategy, including all the IPs and MACCA. The implementation of the strategy started with the recruitment of a dedicated gender focal point at MACCA, the establishment of a gender working group and a series of consultations with the IP.
- However, several challenges are still slowing down gender mainstreaming within the MAPA:
  - o Understanding and knowledge about women and girls' specific needs and priorities in the communities remain limited due to the lack of female staff able to conduct surveys in the field.
  - o **Even more than for other programmes, the deteriorating Afghan context makes it difficult to implement a gender strategy: cultural constraints and security make it very difficult for the MAPA to reduce the large gap between genders in terms of staffing, especially for field-based positions.** The recruitment of female staff for MRE and VA activities as well as office-based jobs should be a priority.
- Unlike gender where some inroads have been made, environmental issues have not been addressed in the same proportions by MACCA or the MAPA as a whole. The main existing mechanism in respect to environment is the existing standard covering environment procedures. Understanding of the potential environmental impact of mine action will need to be significantly reinforced to rapidly integrate this dimension to the programme.

### 1. GENDER MAINSTREAMING: A SLOW START

#### MAPA 2008-2013 STRATEGY: Overview of 'Gender Considerations'<sup>80</sup>

- Ensure that men, women, girls and boys have equal access to mine action activities and their benefits
- Inform staff on issues of gender in the hope of spurring a change in attitude and creating national and social institutions that encourage women participation
- Support the development of training materials, training of trainers and awareness raising activities linked to both MoLSAMD and MoPH to provide better information to disability stakeholders (...) with regards to outreach to women and girls with disability.
- Ensure gender considerations within programme planning, data collection and educational opportunities in mine action.
- Evaluate MRE and VE training activities through FGDs and discussions (...) to improve teaching methodologies and include all genders and ages in these educational activities.
- Comparatively analyse the views of men and women with regards to community clearance priority settings and with regards to the economic benefits of clearance

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<sup>80</sup> MAPA Strategy 2008-2013, p.58-59

Gender has been increasingly included in the strategic documentation surrounding mine action in Afghanistan: already present in relatively broad terms in the 2008-2013 MAPA strategy, it was also clearly stated as an objective in the 2013-2018 UNMAS strategy. Yet, as shown in the overview of the strategy, gender-related strategies have remained relatively broad and do not give clear implementation guidelines. To remediate to this gap, UNMAS commissioned an assessment, which led to the articulation of a specific gender strategy in 2013. It is therefore relevant to take stock of the measures and mechanisms set up to mainstream gender considerations in the MAPA.

### 1.1 State of gender mainstreaming within the MAPA: a very slow start

**Gender mainstreaming with regards to mine action needs to be understood on two different levels.**

- Firstly, it focuses on MACCA and IP staff members and their internal improvements regarding job creation for women and gender training for all employees in order for it to be an understanding of what gender considerations entail, something that is not always grasped, especially in the field<sup>81</sup>.
- Secondly, it involves looking at the projects and activities and analysing the differences that gender may induce in terms of needs of beneficiaries, impact, relevance and sustainability of projects. In the field, MAPA's gender mainstreaming strategy wants to emphasize the "imperative to collectively increase the impact of its mine action work on all stakeholders through the delivery of sex and age appropriate activities and services"<sup>82</sup>.

#### Timid steps taken since 2008

**Knowledge building** – In a move that is quite typical of MACCA, the first series of measure to mainstream gender have focused on building knowledge and a better understanding of what such a concept means for a programme like the MAPA in Afghanistan. Since 2008, various studies and assessments have been conducted with that objective. That includes the *2009 Gender Survey*, through which 300 women were interviewed to get their perception on mine action and the opportunities for them to participate, the *2009-2010 Knowledge, Attitude, Practice and Belief* (KAP survey) or the *2012 Land and Livelihood Assessment in Herat* for example. These studies have tried to capture a) the specific needs of women and girls related to MAPA's areas of activities; b) the impact of demining and other activities from a gender perspective.

For example, it is based on one of these assessments that MACCA revised its prioritisation system, to include the proximity to community centres as a criterion, based on the conclusions that women reported higher levels of stress and anxiety when they were minefields close to community centres and important places (market, mosque etc.)

The 2012 KAP survey showed the issues that women have accessing MRE in the villages, as cultural restrictions may prevent them to access the places where the MRE is delivered (ex: clinics). Unfortunately, this issue remains unsolved and one of the weaknesses of MRE (see MRE section above).

Yet, even if these studies led to the introduction of small measures, MACCA's staff acknowledged that the overall level of awareness and understanding of gender mainstreaming remained very low in the organisation until 2013<sup>83</sup>, even though all MACCA heads of department and the whole staff at HQ received training sessions on gender awareness before 2013.

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<sup>81</sup> Key Informant Interview with an IP staff member in Nangarhar

<sup>82</sup> *MAPA Gender Mainstreaming Strategy 2014-2016*, page 1

<sup>83</sup> Key Informant Interview with a MACCA staff member

## Disaggregated data

The UN gender guidelines stress the importance of getting gender-disaggregated data to get a better understanding of gender-specific needs and dynamics. The MAPA implemented that recommendation and designed some of their forms to be able to get disaggregated data per gender and age. For example, victims of mines are now analysed based on age and gender, an important instrument to support programming, in particular in terms of MRE. Beneficiaries of MRE and VA are also analysed based on disaggregated data. Yet, a recent assessment of the forms used by MAPA stakeholders at different stages of their activities showed that there are still some gaps in the disaggregated data. For example, the QA forms do not collect specific gender-specific data; neither do the Hazard Report forms.

## Organisational adjustments

MACCA also tried to mainstream gender in its own processes by appointing two gender focal points in 2010. The MRE Project Managers were appointed as focal points and trained by the NGO BRAC to support gender-mainstreaming activities within the MAPA. Yet, it became relatively clear rapidly that focal points had too much on their plate – and not enough gender expertise – to bring a real impetus towards gender mainstreaming.

In 2013, it became clear that gender mainstreaming was not really taking off within the MAPA, a point that is visible in the fact that gender as a cross-cutting issue disappears from MACCA's last two annual reports (1390 and 1391), a sign that the attention given to that problem is decreasing within the organisation.

## Real progress made since 2013

The management of MACCA and UNMAS was aware of this weakness of the programme – and of its importance for certain donors. If the realisation was there for some that there was a need for gender mainstreaming, articulating and implementing concrete measures remained very difficult for the MAPA. From 2012 onwards, a real push was made for more meaningful reforms towards gender mainstreaming. To do so, an external consultant from the Gender Mine Action Programme (GMAP) was hired to undertake a complete assessment of the 'state of gender mainstreaming' in the MAPA and to come up with a concrete gender strategy for 2013-2018. The strength of this strategy is to identify concrete actions that can be taken in each pillar and by each actor of mine actions to support gender mainstreaming, rather than staying at a theoretical level. **The articulation of the strategy – based on a clear series of outcomes and indicators for each mine action activity – is in and of itself an important – if belated – milestone for gender mainstream.**

Since then, more concrete steps have been taken. The first steps were to hire a gender advisor within MACCA, in charge of consulting with all IPs on ways to better mainstream gender within their programmes, identify gender focal points in each of these IPs and chair a gender focal point working group<sup>84</sup> each month to progress on the matter<sup>85</sup>. The advisor was hired in April 2014 and the gender focal point working group has been established. At the June MAPA Stakeholders meeting, the majority of IPs had not yet responded to MACCA gender associate's individual requests for meetings on the topic, exhibiting some lack of prioritisation, but it seems that MACCA now has managed to get a gender focal point for each IP<sup>86</sup>.

MACCA's senior management has a genuine desire to raise awareness on gender and gender parity issues and understands the need for actions to be taken in this field<sup>87</sup>; the mere presence of a

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<sup>84</sup> MAPA Strategy 2008-2013, page 57

<sup>85</sup> Key Informant Interview with a MACCA staff member

<sup>86</sup> Key Informant Interview with a MACCA staff member

<sup>87</sup> Key Informant Interview with a MACCA staff member

dedicated staff member (a replacement to fill the position again has just been recruited<sup>88</sup>) is already a very positive development, albeit one that could be considered long needed.

Gender mainstreaming – what has been done?	Gender mainstreaming – what needs to be done in priority as of July 2014 <sup>89</sup> ?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>√ Creation of a MAPA gender mainstreaming strategy</li> <li>√ Training on gender mainstreaming provided to the IPs and MACCA staff</li> <li>√ Creation of a MACCA gender associate position</li> <li>√ Establishment of a gender mainstreaming working group within the MAPA</li> <li>√ Selection of gender focal points in each IP</li> <li>√ Several gender awareness training sessions and workshops held in Afghanistan and the U.A.E. for key MACCA staff in 2008 and 2009</li> <li>√ Implementation of a survey in 2009 in order for women to share their perspectives on gender and mine action</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>X Completion of the review of AMAS and all mine action related processes from a gender mainstreaming perspective</li> <li>X All IPs to develop a gender mainstreaming action plan endorsed by MACCA</li> <li>X Establishing a ratio of men:women in community liaison/impact monitoring teams</li> <li>X Gender-sensitive National Disability Action Plan finalized and adopted</li> </ul>

**Remaining Gaps and Challenges**

**Reciprocal gaps in knowledge at the field level**

Due to the fact that it is difficult for outsiders to access women – especially when survey teams are exclusively composed of men as it is the case in the MAPA – there is still an important disconnect between the MAPA and women’s experience, needs and priorities in the field. If women’s perceptions are integrated in occasional studies, they are still very marginally taken into account in the daily mine activities, especially for demining. This is linked to the wider problem of women’s ability to access employment, travel or appear in the public sphere in the country. This issue will be addressed by IPs within the MAPA in the coming months.

*‘One priority is to conduct pre-implementation surveys with female enumerators to interview women in the communities to find out what their needs and priorities for mine clearance are. There is still a gap in understanding women’s needs in the communities because the survey teams are only men.’*

KII MACCA Staff

The result is that data on women’s needs are only collected indirectly, through discussions with their husbands or fathers or through the community leaders. No need to say that this is far from optimal

<sup>88</sup> Phone interview with a MACCA staff member

<sup>89</sup> Based on GMAP strategy indicators



to get data that can be used for programming. For example, here is the answer from a FGD in Nangarhar:

*“Women are not in great danger because they do not go out much of their house. MRE is not important for women because they do not go out of their homes. When they do, they only go to agricultural fields to help out and collect vegetables.”* FGD Men – Nangarhar Province

On the other side of the coin, confirming past studies, many women still receive information about mines and demining activities or even MRE through indirect channels (husbands, fathers, community leaders) leading to a more imprecise knowledge of the risks. One of the effects of this imprecise knowledge is an increased level of anxiety due to an over-estimation of the risks, with many women reporting far more mine incidents than what actually happened in the area.

### **The major challenge of increasing female representation with the MAPA staff**

**Progress has been very slow in integrating more female staff in the MAPA, both at MACCA and at the IP levels. Yet, it is important to keep in mind some of the cultural barriers that exist in this local context.** For example, deminer is a difficult job to access for women in this country given that demining requires constant overnight stays in the field and hard work in the presence of unrelated men<sup>90</sup>. On the other hand, several areas within mine action are perfectly suited for greater focus on gender issues such as MRE and VA, where pairs of males and females that are related can move freely<sup>91</sup>. In 2014, there is still only around 1% of female staff in the MAPA as a whole<sup>92</sup>. MACCA had consistently around 3% of female staff but the last down-sizing of the organisation also meant letting some female staff go. It currently has 3 female staff at the HQ level<sup>93</sup> out of 150 staff members, as the proportion of female staff has decreased with the nationalisation of the organisation. MACCA regional offices do not employ any women. These results may sound disappointing but need to be nuanced based on the difficult challenge that gender mainstreaming represents in the country. It will only be possible when precise positions where women can operate and bring as much or more to the table than male counterparts are identified within the MAPA. That was adequately done with the pairs of MRE educators working together in the communities. MRE organisations count more women in their staff. For example, ARCS reported having about 25% of female staff.

Despite the strategy which gives some practical applications of how ‘gender mainstreaming’ should be made operational in a programme like the MAPA, the objective of gender mainstreaming remain quite theoretical and detached from the realities on the ground or the practical applications it could have for the programme. IPs in the provinces also have a mixed understanding of gender mainstreaming. It is usually seen as simply meaning to have female quotas in the organisations, which is often impossible given the nature of the work and the cultural implications of choosing a woman over a man for a job just because of gender. Furthermore, MACCA and IPs sometimes face a difficult trade-off as actively seeking to recruit more women could mean letting go staff members with years of experience in demining, something that the organisation is not ready to do and they note that the down-sizing process is going against the recruitment of female staff. Recruiting women for field positions is very difficult or could incur additional expenses to pay for the *mahram*<sup>94</sup>, requiring IPs to plan for this kind of position in advance.

The challenge is not to implement dry and misunderstood processes but rather to understand the needs in country and challenging mentalities through small but lasting changes that do not appear to be western imports. For example, adding a small section on gender mainstreaming efforts in the BSC

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<sup>90</sup> Samuel Hall, (2012), HALO Trust’s Reintegration of Former Combatants into Demining, page 13

<sup>91</sup> Samuel Hall, (2012), HALO Trust’s Reintegration of Former Combatants into Demining, page 13

<sup>92</sup> Estimation of the Gender focal point

<sup>93</sup> MACCA Organogram, April 2014. Not including the Gender Focal Point whose position is not filled for the moment.

<sup>94</sup> Male relative who can accompany a woman working or travelling outside her house.

would help reflect the work already done by certain IPs compared to others<sup>95</sup> and would also help the MAPA in being more discriminating in the ranking of the IPs given that in recent years, the overwhelming majority of projects score above 85%, meaning they are highly satisfactory<sup>96</sup>.

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<sup>95</sup> Key Informant Interview with an IP staff member

<sup>96</sup> GoA, (2012), Ottawa Article 5 Extension Request for Afghanistan, page 115

## 2. ENVIRONMENTAL PROCEDURES

**Unlike gender where some inroads have been made, environmental issues have not been addressed in the same proportions by MACCA or the MAPA as a whole.** With regards to a comprehensive environmental policy linked to mine action where concerns for nature and proper disposal of explosives are taken into account, the latest MAPA strategy makes a mention of it only briefly through the need for IPs to follow the appropriate mine action standards<sup>97</sup> which include a specific and detailed chapter on environmental management<sup>98</sup>. However, and by MACCA's own admission, not enough has been done in this field and a clear set of objectives and indicators is still missing from the organisation's side<sup>99</sup> to enable any important evolution in the field. Contrarily to other areas of their activities where MACCA shows a high level of reflexivity and understanding of its strengths and weaknesses, the impact that the MAPA may have on the environment remains largely unknown. When asked about it, most IPs did not understand to what the questions refer.

Part of the demining work practiced by IPs involves proper storing of ammunition, disposal of ordnance and informing the population before any specific activity. Most already practice these safeguards, based on the existing AMAS for environment, but it is also true that there is not yet in rural Afghanistan a high level of environmental awareness that would push communities to monitor the effect of mine action on their environment. The push will have to come from the MAPA itself.

**Environmental implementation in the field needs to pass by a mainstreaming process at HQ first, which is one of MACCA's core strengths.** As for gender, we can see that the highly centralized structure of MACCA lends itself to the creation of mechanisms and processes at HQ before being carried out in a top-down approach throughout the IPs through focal points, MAPA workshops and other such initiatives. MACCA's management acknowledged this need and reviewed the summary report and PowerPoint presentations of the workshop organised in Kuwait by the GICHD on this issue after it was held. It will now be MACCA's responsibility to articulate an action plan, starting with an effort in knowledge building and the thorough assessment of the environmental impact of mine action in Afghanistan.



Image 1: Deminers with their equipment (MACCA)

<sup>97</sup> MAPA Strategy 2008-2013, pages 59-60

<sup>98</sup> MACCA, (2011), AMAS 07.06, Third Edition – Environmental Management

<sup>99</sup> Key Informant Interview with a MACCA staff member

## D. Transition: A Difficult Trade-off?

### KEY FINDINGS

- The Afghanisation of MACCA staff is now complete, meaning that both managerial and operational positions are now fully occupied by Afghan staff. Nationalising MACCA's staff is undoubtedly one of the successful reforms led by UNMAS in the past 6 years.
- Through a constant effort of capacity building, training and internal reviews, MACCA has reached a very high level of proficiency and expertise that makes it able to coordinate the MAPA virtually independently.
- The consequence of investing heavily in MACCA – a UN project – is a very slow process of transition to national authorities, a process that is still to take off. The objective of transferring responsibilities to the DMC early on has gone unheeded.
- Recently, a few measures have been taken to increase the responsibilities of the DMC and its integration in the MAPA processes, in particular at the decision-making level. The DMC is more integrated in planning and has now the hand on advocacy with the government.
- The lack of national ownership over mine action has significant consequences that may endanger the MAPA in the long run, in particular the inability of UNMAS, MACCA and the DMC to get a mine action law approved or to agree on a mine action strategy that would clearly delineate the roles and responsibilities of MACCA and the DMC and limit their overlaps.

KEY INDICATORS - TRANSITION	
<b>NATIONAL CAPACITIES</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Ratio national:international staff in MACCA</li> <li>✓ % of management position of MACCA occupied by Afghan staff</li> <li>✓ Average years of experience of MACCA staff</li> <li>✓ Self-perceived needs for further training</li> </ul>
<b>NATIONAL OWNERSHIP</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✗ Adoption of a National Mine Action Strategy</li> <li>✗ Adoption of a Mine Action Law</li> <li>✗ Allocation of significant national funds in support of mine action</li> <li>✗ Improved capacities of the DMC</li> <li>✗ Full transfer of responsibilities to the DMC by 2013</li> <li>✓ Measurable increase in the DMC's responsibilities</li> </ul>

A successful transition entails two different components for the MAPA, as highlighted by the 2008 GICHD Evaluation of the Programme<sup>100</sup>:

- a) Having built enough **internal capacity for an exclusively Afghan staff** to be responsible for and execute all the facets of mine action on the one hand;
- b) Having incrementally increased **the role and ownership of national authorities over mine action** for them to be able to take over from a UN-supported entity, like MACCA.

Both 2008 and 2009 evaluations of the MAPA pointed at this aspect as one of the weaknesses of the MAPA, even though a large symposium organised with the government in December 2007 had raised hopes about its commitment to take more responsibilities in supporting mine action. It concluded that MACCA would keep its mandate over mine action coordination until 2013, when the government would be able to take over and oversee the management of what one thought would be

<sup>100</sup> GICHD, (2008), Assessment of the Mine Action Centre for Afghanistan (MACA), p.26.

‘residual risk’. Taking stock of the efforts made by UNMAS and MACCA since 2008 shows that both components were very unevenly implemented.

**1. SUCCESSFUL ‘AFGHANISATION’ OF MACCA**

At the heart of the hope for an Afghan government that is able to address all issues pertaining to mine action on its own is the underlying fact that the country needs qualified individuals to take charge of this task in the few years ahead, leading to the 2023 deadline for a mine-free Afghanistan.

**The nationalisation of MACCA staff is now complete, meaning that both managerial and operational positions are now fully occupied by Afghan staff.** A comparison of MACCA’s organogram in 2008 and 2014 easily shows the solid and rapid progress made by MACCA, with the support of MACCA, towards a complete nationalisation of the structure:

INDICATORS	2008	2014 <sup>101</sup>
# of international staff in MACCA	21	0
# of department headed by Afghans	6/13	10/10
Self-perceived need for further training (MACCA staff)	No data	Limited

**Nationalising MACCA’s staff is undoubtedly one of the successful reforms led by UNMAS in the past 5 years.**

From an organisational perspective, it brings two main benefits:

- Firstly, the national staff is more likely to keep their position for long periods of time, building their own capacities ‘on the job’ and – perhaps more crucially for a programme like the MAPA – nurturing a strong institutional memory within the organisation, an aspect that is undoubtedly one of MACCA’s strengths. While this observation may sound mundane, the lack of institutional memory is one of the key impediments hindering the success of other UN or INGOs’ programmes in Afghanistan.
- Secondly, local staff have proven their commitment to an issue that has ravaged their own country, increasing greatly the sustainability of the project with a structure able to function smoothly with no need for international advisors.

Parallel to the efforts of nationalisation, UNMAS has made considerable efforts and investments in ensuring that the Afghan staff who would be running the MAPA were proficient with the range of tools it needs and supplement those skills with regular seminars and courses abroad. Interestingly, these capacity-building measures are not restricted to MACCA HQ staff but also to field employees; for example, MACCA-East regional manager was in Tajikistan for a management course when the team visited Jalalabad. The high level of expertise and professionalism of MACCA staff – both at the HQ and field levels – was made apparent by the fact that, when asked if there were gaps in their training, most field level staff reported none or only a need for training in secondary skills (English and IT in particular). This shows a) a high level of confidence in one’s level of skills; b) an understanding of the opportunity cost that too many training sessions may have for the programme leading to self-restraint. One key aspect that will impact the sustainability of any transition in the current context is the capacity of the MAPA to retain this qualified staff, despite a decrease in funding and a potential increase in insecurity.

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<sup>101</sup> Official organogram as of April 2014

## 2. TRANSITION, OR THE LACK THEREOF

### **An initial strategic choice still impacting the transition process**

**Achieving a sustainable transition is one of the most questionable achievements of UNMAS. This failure takes its roots in some of the initial choices to establish the architecture of the MAPA in a period of intense need in Afghanistan after the end of the Taliban regime.** At a moment where there were intense movements of return to Afghanistan in a country heavily impacted by various types of mines, establishing mechanisms to organise the mine action quickly was an intense humanitarian priority. The absence of efficient governmental structures on which to base this process led to the creation of a parallel non-governmental structure. An early transfer of power and responsibilities was difficult to implement and if full ownership of the mine action efforts had been entrusted to the government of Afghanistan between 2002 and 2004, there is a strong chance that the MAPA would not have been so successful given the numerous other nation-building priorities that existed (and still exist) at the time.

Some think it was not necessary to delay it for so long<sup>102</sup>, but the case for delaying the process can also be made, in light of the understanding that training people is a very time-consuming process.

Even though the overall aim is to have a larger DMC presence growing in parallel with a smaller MACCA footprint in Afghanistan<sup>103</sup>, the current number of DMC personnel is small compared to the capacity required for coordination. This could mean that UNMAS' support might be required for a long time to come, making it difficult for the DMC to fully take ownership of the problem.

### **The lack of ownership of the Department for Mine Clearance**

The process of transition has been too slow. After the move back to Kabul in 2002, MACCA staff members were told that the transition process would take only a few years<sup>104</sup>; instead, more than ten years later, clear roles and responsibilities still need to be defined between MACCA and the DMC, the Afghan government focal point for all demining activities, in order to actually see a decline of MACCA's role at the expense of a strengthened DMC. In 2012, the DMC still do not even have an official stamp that would enable it to communicate with other government agencies.<sup>105</sup> A rebranding effort in 2008, aimed at shedding the United Nations image of what at the time was UNMACA and making it appear more Afghan was seen as a first step towards making it a fully-fledged government-entity; however, this plan did not materialize<sup>106</sup>.

Additionally, the DMC is still not visible enough with other mine action stakeholders outside of the government system and even though it attends international conferences and other key meetings in Kabul. Its job of reaching out to the government in order to raise awareness and secure governmental funds is extremely difficult given its unclear position<sup>107</sup> such as the specific role it plays in comparison to MACCA. The success of the MAPA under MACCA's coordination efforts had two main consequences for the transition: a) the lack of desire and/or interest for the government to address an issue that was already fully handled – and funded – by the UN; b) the reluctance of all stakeholders to take the risk of weakening a structure that had proven efficient in addressing the huge mine problem in the country; a concern that was legitimate and supported by various evaluations and consultations on the subject<sup>108</sup>.

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<sup>102</sup> Key Informant Interview with a clearance IP staff member

<sup>103</sup> Key Informant Interview with a DMC staff member

<sup>104</sup> Key Informant Interview with a DMC staff member

<sup>105</sup> Paterson, T. *Transitioning Mine Action Programmes to National Ownership: Afghanistan*, page 17. GICHD, November 2012

<sup>106</sup> Key Informant Interview with a DMC staff member

<sup>107</sup> Key Informant Interview with a DMC staff member

<sup>108</sup> See for example EU Mid-Term Evaluation of the MAPA

### Timid progress of the transition process

Despite this slow start, a few measures have been implemented since 2008 that increased slowly the capacities and responsibilities of the DMC. Furthermore, for the past two years, the DMC has been run by a former MACCA employee, who has a clear understanding of the stakes of the transition and the balance necessary between the two institutions. Many stakeholders have noticed a recent – and still timid – progress in the process of transition. The following shows the various measures that have been implemented for a better integration of the two structures. The impact of these measures remains overall limited, particularly outside of Kabul:

- In 2008, the DMC staff in Kabul moved to MACCA compound and a closer collaboration between the DMC staff and MACCA staff was encouraged. This led to an ‘on the job’ training for the DMC staff, an undoubtedly more cost-effective way of building the capacity of the DMC than any one-off training. Yet, the impact of this measure remains uneven, according to various stakeholders as the level of commitment and interest of the DMC staff for the job is varied. For the most technical aspects of MACCA’s expertise in particular – information and data management and GIS – this measure did not lead to the expected outcomes.
- At the provincial level, MACCA field offices are now co-located within ANDMA (the national government agency in charge of disaster management). Yet, this measure does not seem to have yielded a strong impact. Field assessments showed that ANDMA’s implication in mine action is limited and mostly depends on ad hoc relations between MACCA regional managers and other stakeholders. There is very little information sharing between MACCA field offices and ANDMA in the regional hubs, also because it is not ANDMA’s responsibility but rather the DMC’s to focus on demining, and “ANDMA personnel have little experience with mine action”<sup>109</sup>. This is not implemented in every regional centre given particular security considerations, such as in Kandahar<sup>110</sup> where being seen to be too close to the government can be dangerous. UNMAS has taken concrete steps to increase ANDMA’s involvement in mine action at the regional level: a workshop was delivered with ANDMA, MACCA and IP managers on the promotion of MAPA’s contribution to disaster management and a letter was sent to ANDMA’s provincial department appointing them as governmental focal points for mine action in their province. Still, the impact of these measures is yet to be assessed in the field, where the level of cooperation remains very low.
- The DMC and MACCA have noted an increasing desire of UNMAS to address the issue of transition. This was visible for example in the fact that UNMAS commissioned a consultant to analyse the current state of transition and suggest possible ways forward for the architecture of the MAPA. This consultancy presented five options with pros and cons but was not able to detangle what appears to be a real conundrum and a huge trade-off for the MAPA: prioritising national ownership means taking the risk of seeing the efficiency of the MAPA decrease. The conclusion of the study was to favour a ‘dynamic status quo’, hence recommending no major upset of the existing architecture of the MAPA other than building on the current structure by empowering the DMC and making ANDMA more pro-active. Another option would be to complete the autonomisation of MACCA from the UN system, while keeping it relatively independent from the government, a model followed by some institutions in the country.

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<sup>109</sup> MAPA Strategy 2008-2013, page 26

<sup>110</sup> Field Debrief with Team Leader



- The DMC is now more involved in decision-making processes such as planning in particular, which is a positive sign. The DMC is also responsible for advocating within the government for a better inclusion of demining within the development strategy of the government.
- Equally positive is the fact that the DMC is now involved directly in the implementation of components of the mine action, in particular evaluation and QA. For example, activities such as post-demining impact assessments (PDIAs) are now conducted in the field by the DMC as a joint task with MACCA who processes the data in Kabul<sup>111</sup>. Nevertheless, we are not at the expected levels of control yet: six years ago, it was thought that by 2013 the transition period would be over and the DMC would assume decision-making authority for the MAPA<sup>112</sup>, something we are still very far from as the example of whose decision it still is to close down a MACCA field office: UNMAS’<sup>113</sup>. The gap in technical expertise between the two organisations is too wide and the needs too important for a full transition to be implemented rapidly. The new transition process, as suggested by the GICHD graph below, would give the DMC full responsibilities only when the need will be to deal with residual hazards.

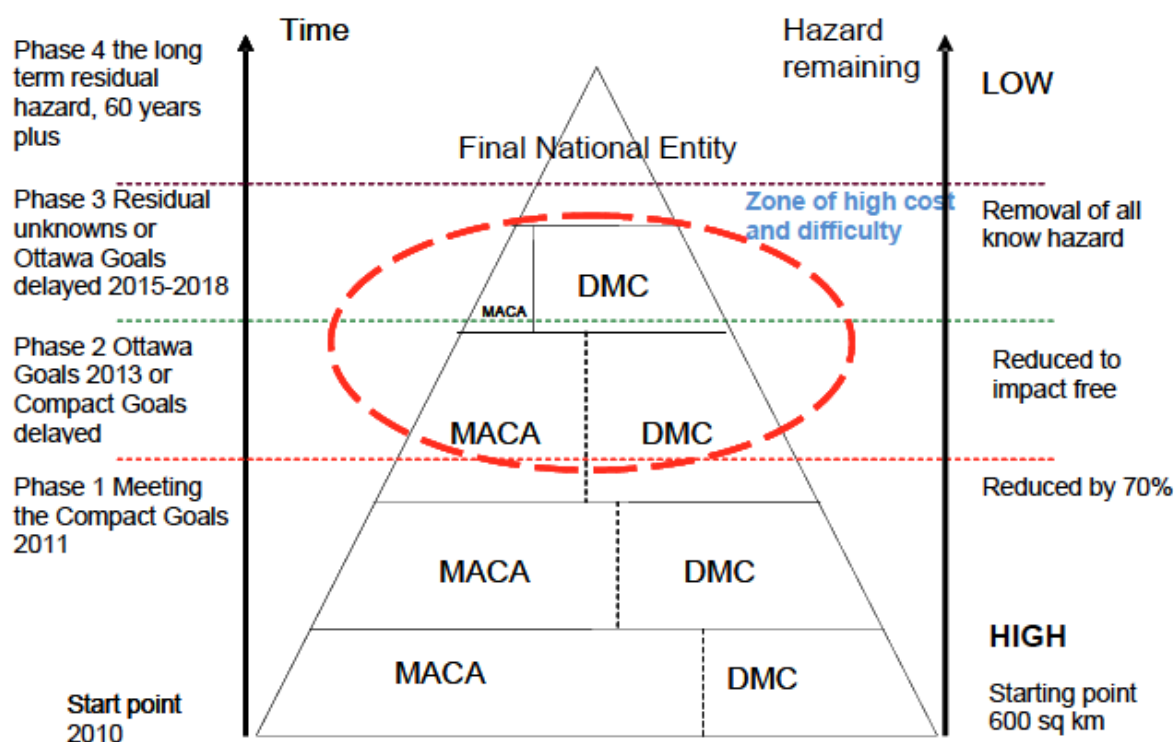


Image 2: Depiction of evolving roles during the transition process (GICHD)

### Factors explaining a weak transition

- The main factor explaining the slow progress of the transition is also in a way a consequence of the success of the MAPA – and particularly of MACCA – which makes it difficult for any actor to be willing to take the risk of endangering a structure that has proven its strength, reliability and, above all, huge impact.

<sup>111</sup> Key Informant Interview with a DMC staff member

<sup>112</sup> Paterson, T., Paktian, F. and Fryer, W. Afghanistan Country Mission Report Evaluation of EC Mine Action: Caucasus-Central Asia Region, page 29. GICHD, September 2008

<sup>113</sup> Key Informant Interview with a UNMAS staff member



One of the key obstacles in the transition process is the difference in remuneration between MACCA and the DMC staff, both of them Afghan. With ten times less salary at the DMC, there is little hope of keeping relatively young, very qualified and educated (most of them English speakers as well) UN employees working for the government, if MACCA was to pass under a governmental framework. The appointment of a former MACCA employee as head of the DMC is a good transition element<sup>114</sup> but he is the only one who is paid like a technical advisor on par with his MACCA counterparts.

#### AREAS OF OPPORTUNITY FOR A STRONGER DMC/MACCA PARTNERSHIP

While the capacity gap between MACCA and the DMC is undeniable at this stage, the DMC has other advantages as a governmental agency part of ANDMA that could be put to better use for the benefit of the MAPA at large. That includes:

- ❖ **Provincial coverage** – Contrarily to MACCA, the DMC - through ANDMA - has the possibility to be represented in every province of Afghanistan. Should one ANDMA staff be clearly designated as a focal point for mine action and trained for it, it would significantly increase the coverage of mine action institutions.
- ❖ **Strengthening QA** – The decrease in funding and staff has led to a decrease in the number of field visits that the QM department is able to conduct – leading some IPs to note a decrease in the robustness of the QA. As it is the case for MRE for example, relying on the government for QA is a good point of entry to increase its involvement in the programme. The ANDMA focal points could support this function.
- ❖ **Building synergies** – ANDMA is first and foremost a disaster-management authority, with only a minor interest for mine action. Yet, the data collected and processed by MACCA can be hugely interesting for the prevention of future natural disasters. In particular, ANDMA would benefit from MACCA's robust methodology of risk-assessment and prioritisation system. MACCA's capacities in GIS and risk mapping could be very useful for ANDMA to mitigate the disastrous consequences of landslides, flooding and avalanches in the country. UNMAS has recognised this potential synergy and participated in an OECD-supported workshop on the link between mine action and disaster management in April 2014 in Dushanbe, Tajikistan. It is to be noted that building the resilience of communities through disaster-prevention is an important concern of donors, who are increasingly reluctant in spending emergency funding on crises that repeat themselves every year. The recent landslide and floods in Badakhshan is a case in point.
- ❖ **Making the best of ANDMA's capacities** – While the DMC/ANDMA are still not strong enough to coordinate mine action activities, the authority is better placed when it comes to disaster management. Some aspects of its portfolio can be useful to the MAPA. For example, ANDMA has the mandate to coordinate emergency response for caseloads of natural-disaster induced IDPs, with the support of IOM. As highlighted above, IDPs are one of the groups more vulnerable to mine risks. Using ANDMA's capacities for rapid assessment could be a way for MACCA to identify and mitigate potential risks linked to the sudden displacement of population: for example avoiding the establishment of IDP settlements in risky areas; assessing the needs for MRE and VA within newly-established IDP communities etc. Some mine action indicators could for example be included in the Rapid Assessment form used by ANDMA and other partners when conducting an emergency response.

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<sup>114</sup> Key Informant Interview with a UNMAS staff member

## Consequences of the weak transition on the MAPA

- **Inability of the MAPA to secure a Mine Action Legislation** – Mine action in Afghanistan is still not based on a clear law or decree, a major impediment towards the establishment of clear guidelines for the government to abide by. The 2008-2013 MAPA Strategy outlines the need for both an inter-ministerial body in charge of mine action policy and oversight as well as for a national mine action centre in charge of implementing said policies. The inter-ministerial body did meet once<sup>115</sup>, but its main measure was to select the DMC as the mine action focal point up until 2013, with MACCA's technical assistance. Both the legal instruments for the formal creation of such a body and the appropriate centre (the DMC) are non-existent or severely limited<sup>116</sup>. This concern for a lack of legal documentation is not only present in Kabul but also at the field level, where some stakeholders think that pushing for a demining law to be passed should be one of MACCA's focus. Not only are these laws necessary for the proper functioning of the MAPA, they are also compulsory based on the conventions signed by Afghanistan such as the Ottawa and cluster munitions conventions. At present, drafts of the law that include greater explanation on the mine action structure, issues of responsibility with regards to liability and the structure in charge of monitoring and evaluation are currently in the hands of the Ministry of Justice (MoJ) for further scrutiny<sup>117</sup>. It is also important to remember that helping in the crafting of legislation is an extremely arcane activity that is not one MACCA has experience advising on<sup>118</sup>. The regulatory process re-started in 2013 with the establishment of a committee comprising UNMAS, MACCA, the DMC, the State Department and IP directors with the positive result of having drafted a mine action law, now in the hands of the MoJ. UNMAS should play an advisory role in this process – both in terms of the technical expertise needed for the law and for the advocacy efforts that will be necessary to get it passed. The absence of a mine action law is particularly problematic for sustainability, as the absence of legal bases could put the MAPA in jeopardy in the future.
- **A direct consequence of the absence of a mine action law is the unclear delineation of responsibilities amongst actors of the MAPA** – in particular MACCA and the DMC. This gap a) creates overlaps between the two actors; b) undermines the credibility and weight of the DMC within the governmental structure; c) leaves space for potential misunderstanding between UNMAS, MACCA and the IPs and for opportunistic behaviour. For example, a year and a half ago, some important IPs tried to step over MACCA in various unorthodox ways such as reaching out to the president directly to suggest their own version of a mine action structure. Their suggestion was to create a ministerial board as a coordination body, where they would also sit, leading to potential conflicts of interest. These moves, which some might qualify as desperate, need to be thought of in the current transition context with dwindling funding and competitive bidding processes for IPs<sup>119</sup>.
- **Missing funding opportunities** – Another unfortunate consequence of blurry lines of responsibility and the lack of progress of the transition is the potential impact it has on the MAPA's funding, a crucial element for the organisation as highlighted many times in this report. The lack of attention paid to transition and national ownership meant that UNMAS missed the important step of the National Priority Programme (NPPs) process carried out by

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<sup>115</sup> Key Informant Interview with a DMC staff member

<sup>116</sup> *MAPA Strategy 2008-2013*, pages 24-25

<sup>117</sup> Key Informant Interview with a DMC staff member

<sup>118</sup> Key Informant Interview with a MACCA staff member

<sup>119</sup> Key Informant Interview with a UNMAS staff member

the Afghan government a few years ago<sup>120</sup>. Mine action is not clearly mentioned in any of these NPPs. This had catastrophic consequences for the MAPA as donors like the European Union are now exclusively funding programmes aligned with the NPPs, leading to a major loss of funding. This is the result of two main problems: firstly the absence of the DMC at the upper echelons of government – cabinet meetings in particular – that prevented it to properly advocate for demining to be appropriately integrated in the NPPs; secondly it has to be linked to the lack of attention paid to government ownership by UNMAS and MACCA until recently, which prevented the organisation from identifying this movement as an utter priority – and indeed a risk – for the MAPA. Another challenge for the DMC also comes from the fact that, through ANDMA, it reports to the second vice-president of Afghanistan and fails to reach higher government levels in order to generate political will, meaning that mine action has not been included in the national government budget for the past 24 years. Finally, the lack of transition impacts a third type of funding, that is for the donors who are particularly sensitive to this aspect of the MAPA strategy, like the German government for example. On a positive note, UNMAS, MACCA and the DMC have been advocating for the inclusion of mine action as a cross-cutting issue and several ministries have now agreed to amend their NPPs in order to include mine action.

**Table 9: OVERVIEW OF THE TRANSITION PROCESS AS OF 2014**

STATE OF PROGRESS – TRANSITION	Achieved	Ongoing	Missing	Level of Priority
Adoption of a Mine Action Law			√	High
Adoption of a Mine Action Structure			√	High
Full transfer of responsibility to the DMC			√	Low
Adoption of a Transition Strategy	√			High
Capacity-building of the DMC		√		High
Capacity of the DMC to autonomously conduct advocacy and representation activities for the MAPA	√			High
Increased involvement of the MoE in MRE	√			Medium
Increased involvement of MoPH in VA		√		High
Increased responsibilities of the DMC at Kabul level		√		High
Increased responsibilities of the DMC/ANDMA at regional level			√	High

<sup>120</sup> The NPPs are 22 Priority Programmes identified by the GfR/A to implement the Afghan National Development Strategy (ANDS) in a context of diminishing funding. They were developed in 2012 and, upon request of the GfR/A, all the processes have to be aligned on the NPPs (budgeting, provincial planning etc.).

In conclusion, given the very early stage of the transition process and the heavy reliance on international donors for funding that the Afghan government seems to accept and not prioritize, **there is a risk for a stagnation of this process as funds possibly decrease and a wider political disengagement forces the DMC to de facto function more autonomously. Yet, at this stage, with the current level of capacities within the DMC and the funding uncertainties, there is still a need for several years of MACCA presence in Afghanistan. Still, the MAPA – and UNMAS in particular – can no longer ignore the issue of transition as its impact on funding increases.**

## E. Funding and advocacy: the MAPA, victim of its own success?

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### KEY FINDINGS

- Despite its achievements, UNMAS and the MAPA in general are facing a difficult funding crisis that may endanger the programme and limit the ability of its actors to reach their objectives and legal obligations.
- Most of the factors impacting MAPA's funding are external to the programme and have to do with a shift of priorities towards other humanitarian crises, the withdrawal of international military forces and a general donor fatigue towards a programme that has been in place for the past 25 years.
- A few internal factors are also instrumental in the decrease of funding, such as the centralisation of fundraising, the limited ability of some IPs to raise funds for themselves due to a lack of attention to the issue, and some missed opportunities (like the NPPs).
- This is an argument in favour of a change in strategy at the country level. One option to increase the pool of donors includes increasing interactions with development actors. At a time when external humanitarian and donor assistance is becoming scarcer (Afghanistan is less strategic for foreign governments than even a few years ago), UNMAS has to be innovative in its fund-raising strategy. UNMAS has to better conceptualize donor priorities, which in general have moved towards themes that cut across all sectors: workforce development and economic growth.
- UNMAS is a dynamic and respected voice in the humanitarian world, as well as in the realm of civil-military cooperation. Yet, in order to adjust to the changing context, the organisation may have to take stronger positions on delicate issues such as IEDs.

### 1. NEED FOR A NEW FUNDING STRATEGY

#### Increasing difficulties in securing funding

The MAPA has two sources of funding: international donations processed by the UN as part of the VTF and bilateral contributions to the IPs. The modalities for these different types of funding are varied and depend on the financial imperatives of the donors as well on their development aid philosophy and policies. Japan and Finland for example give on a yearly basis<sup>121</sup> while the Canadians for instance focus on multi-year plans<sup>122</sup>. Others still like Germany and the United States only fund demining activities bilaterally and on a project basis, meaning that they assess the value and potential of proposals made by IPs before disbursing funds<sup>123</sup>. In practice, it means that UNMAS and MACCA start the year with uncertain funding pledges and struggle throughout the year to find funding. For example, for the current Afghan calendar year, UNMAS and MACCA have calculated that there is a need for 76.9 Million USD. Out of this amount, they have as of September 2014 secured only 37 Million and therefore need another 39.9<sup>124</sup>.

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<sup>121</sup> Key Informant Interview at the Japanese Embassy and at the Finnish Embassy

<sup>122</sup> Key Informant Interview at the Canadian Embassy

<sup>123</sup> Key Informant Interviews at the German Embassy and at the US Embassy

<sup>124</sup> MACCA (2014), An Overview of Mine Action in Afghanistan, slide 27

The table below shows the funding breakdown for last year (1392) by donor.

Donor	Bilateral funding (USD)	VTF contribution (USD)	Total donation (USD)
United States	19 849 816	490 000	20 339 816
United Arab Emirates	8 265 000	959 976	9 224 976
Netherlands	4 014 919	1 500 000	5 514 919
Japan	1 738 591	3 500 000	5 238 591
Australia	5 133 000		5 133 000
Germany	4 005 601	1 500 000	5 505 601
Canada		1 900 000	1 900 000
Afghanistan	2 562 946		2 562 946
United Kingdom	2 537 222		2 537 222
Norway	2 441 139		2 441 139
Finland	950 475	1 060 080	2 010 555
Sweden	1 784 050		1 784 050
Denmark	1 186 793	429 384	1 616 141
European Union		1 417 012	1 417 012
Ireland	1 215 338		1 215 338
Pakistan-Afghanistan-Tajikistan Regional Integration Prog.	987 410		987 410
Italy		904 998	904 998
UN unrestricted fund	819 435		819 435
UNOCHA	497 505		497 505
Belgium	327 500		327 500
Austria		173 326	173 326
Oman		100 000	100 000
Saudi Arabia		100 000	100 000

Korea		48 000	48 000
Luxembourg		15 394	15 394
Lithuania		5 880	5 880
<b>Total (1392)</b>	<b>59 889 215</b>	<b>14 103 880</b>	<b>73 993 095</b>

Table 10: Last year's contributions to mine action (source: MACCA)

As mentioned above, the decrease in funding is becoming one of the main threats to the success of the MAPA and its ability to achieve the targets set by international treaties. From 113 Million USD obtained in 2011/12, the MAPA could only secure slightly less than 74 Million last year.

**The reasons evoked for this decrease in funding are first and foremost external and independent from UNMAS' and MACCA's good performance**, as donors are facing their own internal contingencies and leaving the MAPA struggling with reaching its funding targets. Firstly the global financial crisis has left western governments with fewer funds to disburse for international aid. Secondly, other humanitarian needs in other countries have surfaced such as Syria, and last year's cyclone in the Philippines, while the interest for Afghanistan is decreasing, parallel to the withdrawal of international military forces and the political transition; and thirdly, donor fatigue has kicked in, leaving a 25 year-old programme struggling due to the lack of visibility the issue has in the media and at home (also because the number of casualties has largely decreased)<sup>125</sup>. It is however important to mention that some traditionally constant donors such as the Japanese and the Finns are doing their best to maintain the same level of funding each year in order not to impose heavy changes to MACCA.

Furthermore, the current instability linked to the election process is an added source of concern for foreign embassies that halts them from committing too much to aid for next year until the situation is stabilized. However it is possible that if a new legitimate administration steps in and stability prevails, donors could feel more confident about the political climate and thus fund a wider range of activities rather than focusing on a core portfolio deemed essential, of which mine action is not always a part. Mine action's lack of visibility is another side effect of the funding decrease. The fact that not as many people die from mines now than before (an average of 39 a month nowadays compared to a similar rate per day in the 1990s<sup>126</sup>) is unfortunately another argument that partially explains the lack of money.

### UNMAS and MACCA – An excellent image amongst donors

On a very positive note, no stakeholder mentions resource misappropriation by UNMAS or MACCA, nor has the DMC witnessed any such cases<sup>127</sup>. This goes to show that mine action can be trusted and should in fact be one of the arguments used to secure funds in the future. Furthermore there is not a single donor interviewed for this evaluation that did not praise the work done by UNMAS and MACCA in terms of coordination of the MAPA; they all recognize the quality and professionalism of the Afghan staff and share the belief that Afghanistan still needs to be supported. Capitalising on the extremely positive reputation of this UN structure (not only from international donors but also from Afghans) is the key to obtaining adequate funding at a regular pace.

<sup>125</sup> Key Informant Interview with a UNMAS staff member

<sup>126</sup> MACCA (2014), An Overview of Mine Action in Afghanistan, slides 5/8

<sup>127</sup> Key Informant Interview with a DMC staff member

**While external factors clearly play against the MAPA, the lack of funding has also to do with some internal factors:**

- Securing funds for the MAPA (and MACCA in particular) is an extremely time consuming activity, something that has high opportunity costs for all the MAPA actors. Previous years have seen UNMAS find the necessary funds easily, with budgets of more than 100 Million USD, such as in 2011 and earlier<sup>128</sup>. However, the previous UNMAS programme manager's personal efforts over 5 years now need to be taken over by her replacement. Much of the fund securing activity can be put on her strong investment but this approach contains two challenges. Firstly, the capacity to raise funds and keep mine action on the agenda of donors at the Kabul level is personality-based, something that may hinder the future of the MAPA. Being able to clearly communicate and advocate for larger funding at this crucial moment for Afghanistan, where many donors are wary of what the near future might hold for the country, is essential. Secondly, this activity is still highly centralised within UNMAS meaning that the senior MACCA staff is only peripherally involved by doing presentations during meetings. Given that fundraising will be a core element of this organisation when it becomes fully independent from the UN, the transition strategy needs to come up with processes that will gradually enable MACCA staff to take care of their funding, similar to the efforts made by the DMC to find funds in the Afghan government budget specifically for mine action.
- **IPs have unevenly taken on board the need for them to raise fund independently from UNMAS, through bilateral funding**<sup>129</sup>. The system of bilateral funding is robust as donors coordinate closely with MACCA to ensure that the priorities and targets are in line with MACCA's planning. Besides, all IPs must be accredited and MACCA will also review the proposals sent to donors. Yet, this stream of funding has not been optimised, partly because of the lack of autonomy of some of the IPs on that matter.
- **Communication to donors fails at demonstrating the direct and indirect socio-economic impact of mine action.** The question of the impact on development is developed below but there are other areas where demining should be associated with humanitarian programmes due to its indirect impact. For example, migration and the support to uprooted populations is an important focus of the EU. MACCA has proven that IDPs were a particularly vulnerable group and has included this criterion in its priority system. Donors should be informed of these indirect impacts, as they could associate mine action to several of other types of programmes.
- At the HQ level, it was noted that the communication with donors could also be improved and sustained more in order to keep the attention and support of donors.

Through regular coordination meetings, pitches to donors and a wealth of invaluable shareable data and maps that can have multiple purposes outside of mine action (such as for other types of disaster mapping), UNMAS and MACCA have been able to demonstrate their efficiency and cost-effectiveness by reducing their staff. Donors do not contest this but it seems that outside factors are in large part responsible for this financial disappointment. It might even be seen as a larger disappointment given that the total cost of the mine action programme is set to decrease yearly<sup>130</sup> as part of the 10 year extension plan crafted for the Ottawa Convention, which in theory should facilitate the securing of funds due to the incentive to spend less every year.

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<sup>128</sup> MACCA (2014), An Overview of Mine Action in Afghanistan, slide 26

<sup>129</sup> Key Informant Interviews with UNMAS, MACCA and IP staff members

<sup>130</sup> GoA, (2012), Ottawa Article 5 Extension Request for Afghanistan, page 7



### Time for an innovative funding strategy?

Key informants agree that UNMAS and MACCA are efficient and effective organisations, and some even suggest the structure and approach should be emulated by other entities operating in Afghanistan. MACCA is a 100% Afghan led and operated organisation and understands the importance of having a well maintained databank and quality data to make informed decisions on programmatic implementation and to support its vision and strategy. However, despite a proven track record, widespread acclaim, and a clearly delineated plan for the future based on credible data, UNMAS and MACCA have fallen short of fund raising targets over the past two years. One of the reasons for their inability to reach funding targets is that the organisations are mostly perceived as humanitarian and as such have been unable to secure long-term funding from large traditional development players.

In reality, UNMAS and MACCA are at the crossroad of humanitarian and development work, but have not been effective in articulating their position within this nexus. In this regard UNMAS has to build the awareness amongst key donors about MAPA's role as a facilitator for rural development and economic growth, in certain sectors, agriculture in particular.

**At a time when external humanitarian and donor assistance is becoming scarcer (Afghanistan is less strategic for foreign governments than even a few years ago), UNMAS has to be innovative in its fund-raising strategy. UNMAS has to better conceptualize donor priorities, which in general have moved towards themes that cut across all sectors: workforce development and economic growth.**

While MACCA and UNMAS are excellent at using their data for programming, they are less able to do so for fund raising. In particular, and as briefly mentioned above, the link between demining and development remains unclear and hardly quantified. While it is clear that this quantification is no easy exercise, it will also be key for UNMAS to demonstrate this link to donors and policy makers to position the programme on another stream of funding.

Advantages for UNMAS to clarify the development fallout of its programme are many-fold, including:

- Increasing UNMAS' pool of donors;
- Accessing longer-term funding for an easier planning
- Accessing large program of funding
- Raising the profile of the demining programme with the Afghan government and linking it up with Afghanistan's wider development priorities
- Opening ways and creating synergies to optimise the development impact of the MAPA through partnership with agriculture-oriented development programmes.

Based on the past land and livelihoods assessment conducted by MACCA, it is clear that agriculture and pasture are the most common use of the land after demining. Supporting the inclusive growth of the agricultural sector in Afghanistan is very high on the agenda of important donors and organisations, including USAID, the Afghan government and the World Bank, as a way to 'boost productivity growth, employment and poverty reduction' in the country<sup>131</sup>. Land for agricultural purposes is scarce in Afghanistan and the MAPA has the ability to increase landmass for potential crop production and therefore to increase revenues and to create jobs.

Through its past Land and Livelihoods Assessments, MACCA has already collected data and put together case studies that can be very useful to demonstrate the MAPA's impact on development<sup>132</sup>.

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<sup>131</sup> World Bank (2014), Islamic State of Afghanistan: Agriculture Sector Review (ASR). Revitalizing Agriculture for Economic growth, Job Creation and Food Security. p. vii.

<sup>132</sup> See MACCA, GICHD and NRI, (2011), Livelihoods analysis of landmine affected communities in Afghanistan; see also MACCA, GICHD and Gender Mine Action, (2012), Livelihoods Analysis of Landmine/ERW affected communities in Herat province, Afghanistan.

The organisation is undoubtedly building its capacities in impact assessments, even though quantitative data remains a real challenge<sup>133</sup>. **The missing link is to use this information for fund-raising with development actors. It is now critical for the organisation to take the next step: use this data, model it, build case studies and pitch the results to development donors.** That means going beyond the cost-benefit analysis of clearance to demonstrate economic impact - which is considered paramount to donors: jobs, revenues and potentially government revenues. Discussions with donors should be organised around two main axes:

- 1) **How is the MAPA contributing to the economic development of Afghanistan?**
- 2) **How could the MAPA contribute to the economic development of Afghanistan if it were properly linked with development programmes?**

## PITCHING FOR THE ECONOMIC IMPACT OF LAND CLEARANCE

*The following box is an example of the pitch that UNMAS could use to convince development actors of a) its existing impact on revenues and job creation; b) its potential impact if adequately supported by donors. MACCA should help UNMAS identify a couple of case studies that could be used for such a pitch. The following box details a hypothetical case of 10,000 square metres cleared in Parwan province and now used to produce grape to draw a model of the potential economic impact of this land cleared. Grapes are considered a high priority for the Afghan agriculture sector. There are commonly grown in the Southern and Central regions, two key regions for the MAPA.*

### **What does demining do for development? Here is an example:**

*In 2009, MACCA decided to clear 10,000 square metres (1 ha) in Parwan province through DDG. Five years later, the land is now being used by commercial grape producers. Grape (kishmish in the model) is one of the high value cash crops in the country and is Afghanistan's largest fresh fruit commodity<sup>134</sup>. Based on up to date World Bank horticulture data, it is possible to calculate the economic impact of demining on the area<sup>135</sup>.*

**With traditional methods of production and in a good-case scenario: from year 5 onwards the hectare of grapes generated approximately \$4,550 per harvest. The grape production created 5 to 6 direct jobs and supported 3 indirect jobs.**

The income generated can be calculated as follows:

- **Minimal initial Investment:** Most Afghan farmers rely on the traditional earth-trellised vineyard system, whereby farmers grow the crop on mud walls.
- **Direct Labour:** 1 ha of grapes requires the equivalent of 300 man-days but the harvesting happens over two months. Hence 1 ha will create 5 to 6 jobs over that period.
- **Costs of production:** 1 ha of grape will need approximately 300 man-days of work for production. With an average daily wage in horticulture of about 300 AFN/day, the labour cost can be estimated around \$1,500 per harvest.
- **Typical yield:** 10 mt per ha
- **Typical farm-gate price fresh grapes:** \$200 to \$250 per mt (traditional methods produce, on average, lower quality grapes)
- **Typical farm-gate price – raisin:** \$4000 per m
- **Gross income:** With typically 50% of the production being sold as fresh grapes and 50% as raisin: \$6050 per harvest
- **Profit:** \$4,550 per harvest

<sup>133</sup> Ibid. p. 25

<sup>134</sup> World Bank (2014), *Islamic State of Afghanistan : Agriculture Sector Review (ASR)*

<sup>135</sup> World Bank (2014), *ASR - Horticulture Sector Review*

- **Indirect Labour:** local trader (1); truck driver or transporter (1); larger trader (1)

### *What could demining have done?*

Were demining activities properly linked to development programmes in the country, the impact of the clearance on revenues and job creation could be optimized. In particular, programmes of development providing financing to farmers (investment capital and/or working capital) and support to farmers in terms of agricultural best practices would be necessary<sup>136</sup>.

**With more modern and attainable methods of production (wire-trellising), the hectare of grapes could have generated more than \$ 15,250 of revenue per harvest from year 5 onwards. It would have led to the creation of 10 to 12 direct jobs and 5 indirect jobs<sup>137</sup>**

Income generated and job creation can be calculated as follows:

- **Initial Investment:** \$5,700 for the initial installation. \$10,000 of total cost for the first 3 years
- **Direct Labour:** 1 ha of grapes requires the equivalent of 300 man-days with traditional methods of production. Through wire trellising, the typical yield increases three-fold, meaning an increased need for labour, estimated to be two-fold to about 600 man-days or 10 to 12 direct jobs.
- **Costs of production:** Labour costs in this hypothesis would be of app. \$3,000 per year. Operating costs are estimated around \$2,750 per year.
- **Typical yield:** 30 mt per ha
- **Typical farm-gate price of fresh grapes:** \$350 to \$400 per mt (on average, higher quality grapes would be produced and therefore would command a higher price)
- **Typical farm-gate price of raisin:** \$4,000 per mt
- **Gross income from year 5:** With typically 50% of the production being sold as fresh grapes and 50% as raisin: \$21,000 per harvest
- **Profit from year 5:** \$15,250
- **Indirect Labour:** local trader (1); truck driver (1); processing and packaging (2); larger traders (1)

### *Conclusion*

In a country where land is scarce and in great needs of private sector development, demining activities have played a huge role in the development of the country – a role that remains often unnoticed. With the transition to come, the MAPA requests the support of development actors for two key components: a) accomplish its mission and give back to Afghans their land; b) optimize the impact of land release on job creation and private sector development by linking demining to already-existing development programmes.

Based on a similar model, other examples of the economic benefits of demining can be used for fund-raising, including the possibility of extending the railway line in Mazar-e-Sharif, and the creation of a water drainage system from Parwan to New Kabul City, East of the capital. The aim is to develop simple case studies that quantify the impact of demining on job creation and private sector development, two key sectors for development donors.

<sup>136</sup> For example, USDA's Afghanistan Agricultural Extension Project (AAEP), which works to build the capacity of MAIL's extension agents to impart more knowledge and best-practices to Afghan farmers and the USAID Agriculture Credit Enhancement (ACE) which provides financing (investment capital and/or working capital) to farmers through the Agricultural Development Fund (ADF), then traditional methods could be replaced with modern production and processing techniques.

<sup>137</sup> Estimation based on the World Bank (2014) ASR Review.

## 2. ADVOCACY AND COORDINATION WITH OTHER STAKEHOLDERS

**UNMAS is an active voice in a series of forums related to humanitarian issues, protection and civil-military dialogue and its importance is acknowledged by most<sup>138</sup>. Yet, with the changing context, it will have to position itself and be active on a series of controversial issues.**

One of the issues facing the MAPA is that it can be regarded as a tight-knit family where all stakeholders are dependent on one another and outside actors do not have the same level of understanding of its range of activities, history and importance in the present context. In parallel to this situation, the nature of hazards is changing in Afghanistan. ERWs and other battlefield-related hazards such as IEDs are replacing AP and AT mines as the main sources of danger; with this, the image of the MAPA is at risk of shifting from one of a clearer of the remnants of the Soviet occupation to an actor much more involved in the ongoing conflict. At this crossroad (both for mine action and for Afghanistan), the MAPA has two options. It can either remain a highly impartial actor that chooses to focus on the clearance of mostly old ordnance with a few inroads into other issues such as IEDs, battlefields and ranges; or it can develop a new advocacy strategy that sees it being at the forefront of the action against these new threats along with a major push towards external actors that can assist the MAPA. The MAPA is going towards the second option with discussions about cluster munitions and sites of kinetic engagement, and a greater level of interaction with ISAF and individual TCNs, something that needs to be carefully weighted. Still, it is relevant for UNMAS to keep the MAPA as close as possible to the threats that civilians are exposed to, at least through robust advocacy efforts. Regarding the challenges raised by the IEDs, that could mean pushing other actors to act: EUPOL and UNAMA work closely with the police and ministry of interior. Advocacy efforts should aim at putting the question of IEDs on the agenda and pushing for these organisations to support the training and the equipment of the police to remove IEDs.

**Finally, it will be impossible to achieve any meaningful change in this area without a proactive media and communications push.** As a precedent, the issue of firing ranges in Afghanistan and their clearance following the withdrawal of foreign troops was taken seriously by ISAF only when the media extensively covered a UNAMA report on civilian casualties in its vicinities. The power of the news should not be underestimated and as such, a sound and comprehensive media strategy both in Afghanistan and abroad must be developed. In Afghanistan, this campaign would include new billboards and radio messaging, while as internationally it could include individual stories that would speak to western audiences, along with foreign representatives and ambassadors visiting the HQ in New York more often, as they have mentioned feeling slightly abandoned by the organisation<sup>139</sup>. The actor Jeremy Renner (who starred in *The Hurt Locker*, a Hollywood movie on deminers in Iraq) is a UNMAS ambassador and even visited Afghanistan where he said that mine action was “an issue that could be solved with the proper levels of funding”<sup>140</sup>. Such media/public relations activities, along with MACCA website overhaul<sup>141</sup> are great initiatives and will certainly help the organisation gain in visibility given that donors often respond to mass mobilisations where a sense of urgency can be appropriately conveyed.

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<sup>138</sup> Key Informant Interview with donors and a UNMAS staff member

<sup>139</sup> Key Informant Interview with a UNMAS staff member

<sup>140</sup> <http://www.mineaction.org/unmas/videos/jeremy-renner-afghanistan-United-Nations-unmas>

<sup>141</sup> <http://www.macca.org.af/>

# Evaluating UNMAS on the OECD – DAC criteria

2008-2014

## RELEVANCE

**How relevant is UNMAS' strategy and implementation priorities for a country in transition like Afghanistan?**

- With an average of 39 victims of mines and ERWs per month, still about 4,300 hazards to clear, more than 1,630 affected communities and an estimated 2.7% prevalence rate of mine survivors in the population, mine action remains utterly relevant in a country like Afghanistan. This is even clearer when taking into consideration the fact that contamination is still happening and that it may increase in the coming years, with increasing risks linked to other types of explosive devices such as Pressure Plate IEDs (PPIED), which claimed on average 61 victims per month over the past 2 years.
- UNMAS and MACCA have kept the programme relevant over the past six years by adjusting it to the changing priorities on the ground. Through a tight programming and prioritisation system, the programme is able to adequately absorb the socio-economic evolutions and translate them rapidly into concrete measures.
- The objective of increasing focus on victim assistance required by the last global strategy is slow to be translated into practical measures by the MAPA. This is partly due to the fact that no clear outcomes, priority sectors of intervention and milestones have been defined for the Afghan context, something that MACCA is currently addressing through a large situational analysis.

# EFFICIENCY

## How efficiently have programme resources been used?

- Resources of the MAPA are used more efficiently in 2014 than in 2008 with a reduction of coordination costs through a down-sizing of MACCA, an increased productivity linked to technological progress and the introduction of competitive bidding between IPs, and a more precise knowledge of the state of the problem on the ground.
- The impact of the series of reforms in the functioning of MACCA and of the MAPA as a whole is visible in the decrease of the price of demining per square metres and of the budget allocated to coordination.
- In the absence of stable, multi-year funding, the efforts that MAPA stakeholders have to put on securing funding throughout the year have an opportunity cost for the programme and divert resources from implementation.

# EFFECTIVENESS

## Did UNMAS achieve overall programme objectives?

- Due to the constant re-assessment of baseline data on contamination throughout the period, the MAPA had to revise its objectives as the targets laid down in the Ottawa treaty or Afghan Compact were not realistic.
- The absence of clear yearly targets until 2013 make it difficult to assess the achievements of the programme against targets, hence to communicate clearly on this with donors. Since the extension request was accepted, the MAPA has been able to reach the yearly targets it had planned for in the 10-year work plan.
- Three main sets of objectives are yet to be achieved: a) national ownership on mine action; b) gender mainstreaming; b) increased focus on and impact of victim assistance. At this stage, the relevance of some of these objectives can be called into question.

## Were there challenges in doing so?

- Insecurity and a limited access limit the capacities of the programme to a) survey certain areas to confirm the state of contamination; b) send teams to conduct demining or MRE activities. In some regions, that may make the 2023 deadline difficult to meet. UNMAS and MACCA pushed for the development of community-based activities over the period, an effective way of addressing this problem.
- The lack of funding in the recent years has also impacted MAPA's ability to reach its objectives, as some teams could not be mobilised or projects be funded. Activities considered less central, such as the VA or gender mainstreaming, usually suffer first from decreased funding.

# IMPACT

## What is the impact of UNMAS' activities at the individual, community and national levels?

- The direct impact of mine action, particularly demining and MRE, under UNMAS and MACCA's leadership, over the past six years is tangible:
  - 451 square kilometres have been either cleared or cancelled between 2008 and 2013
  - 9,242 hazards have been cleared between 2008 and 2013
  - The number of civilian casualties has dropped from 792 in 2008 to 484 in 2013
- The impact of VA is still limited. UNMAS did have an impact on the response of governmental entities to the question of survivors, through a constant technical support to line ministries and an increased awareness of stakeholders. Yet, the impact on availability of services for victims remains limited at this stage.
- The indirect and development impact of the programme are not properly assessed and quantified nor integrated in a real donor and advocacy strategy. These impacts are however certain and include: protection of IDPs, increased productive opportunities for communities, removal of blockages for infrastructures, decreased costs linked to victim assistance.
- The environmental impact of demining remains a question mark for MACCA, as no particular benchmarks or strategy have been decided.

# SUSTAINABILITY

## Is the MAPA sustainable in its current architecture in post-2014 Afghanistan?

- Two main challenges hinder the sustainability of the programme supported by UNMAS:
  - A decrease in funding that seriously endangers the programme ability to operate;
  - The unclear delineation of responsibilities with national actors, lack of interest of the Afghan government for mine action and the absence of law to frame mine action in the country.
- At this stage, the conditions are not gathered to reduce the importance of MACCA, as it would threaten – not increase – the sustainability of the programme. Yet, advocacy efforts to raise the importance of mine action on the agenda of the new administration are necessary.

## 4. CONCLUSION & RECOMMENDATIONS

**UNMAS and the MAPA are in a paradoxical situation. Successful and increasingly efficient over the past six years, it is now in a delicate position to negotiate the years to come, as it struggles to secure the yearly funding it needs to allow Afghanistan to fulfil its treaty obligations.**

Few programmes can claim success in Afghanistan. The MAPA can. Few programmes can claim having an unquestionable humanitarian and development impact. The MAPA can. Few programmes can claim to be built on up-to-date data and robust analysis. The MAPA can. Few organisations can claim to have built technical and management capacities in a sustainable manner. UNMAS can.

The capacities developed by the organisation over the years, especially over the past six years and at MACCA level, make of it a rather unique organisation in the Afghan humanitarian landscape.

This evaluation found evidence that, over the past six years, MACCA, under UNMAS' impulse, was successful in:

- Bringing its staff to a very high level of capacities
- Autonomously coordinating the MAPA
- Building a very efficient integrated information management system feeding directly into analysis and programming
- Maintaining a high level of flexibility to take on board necessary changes rapidly and keep its programming as close to the field reality as possible
- Increasing the productivity and coverage of MAPA's demining activities, while improving the quality of services delivered and the safety of its staff.

In spite of these achievements, challenges rise ahead of the MAPA, as a funding crunch and an uncertain legal status weaken the sustainability of the programme as a whole and are likely to impact its ability to deliver a country mine-free in 2023. To a large extent, this delicate situation is linked to factors that are not in the hands of UNMAS and MACCA.

Internal weaknesses of the programme also prevented the MAPA from preparing adequately for the transition to come and help explaining the delicate situation the programme is now in, including the following:

- While the impact of demining activities is clear, the impact of MRE and VA are less obvious – also because they are less easy to measure. In particular, a the needs of groups at particularly high risks – young boys and nomads population for example – could be better integrated in MRE and community monitoring activities to push for an increased awareness of communities to translate in a change in behaviours.
- The attention bore to various mine action activities is still unbalanced, meaning that victim assistance remains relatively weak in the country, despite efforts made to build up the capacities of line ministries to tackle this challenge. MACCA took recent measures to fill this gap; the impact of these will have to be closely monitored by UNMAS over the coming years.
- The MAPA has been slow to take on board some more recent areas of focus of donors, namely gender-mainstreaming and the environmental impact of mine action. This is partly due to a delay in acknowledging the importance of these issues for the MAPA. Yet, the specific socio-cultural environment of the country should also push donors to adjust expectations to realistic achievements.
- The failure for UNMAS to push for a genuine transition towards national ownership of the programme, meaning that the government of Afghanistan has not acknowledged mine action as one of its priorities and that the capacities of UNMAS' main national counterpart –



the DMC – are too low to consider a sustainable transition of responsibilities at this stage. The absence of national mine law further weakens the sustainability of the programme in a country where the outcomes of the political transition are uncertain.

**More fundamentally, the MAPA's delicate situation comes from the difficulty for UNMAS to clearly articulate the position of the MAPA on the humanitarian-development continuum. This means missed opportunities for funding. The programme remains difficult to understand and relatively opaque to outsiders, and its mandate is unclear. On the one hand, UNMAS is struggling to prove that mine action is still a humanitarian necessity in Afghanistan. Yet, the MAPA "saves lives and reduces suffering" – as per OCHA's definition of humanitarian assistance – in a country that is still at the top of the list in terms of scope of contamination and number of civilian casualties per year<sup>142</sup>. On the other hand, UNMAS and MACCA have not provided evidence of the programme's impact on the development of communities and of the country as a whole. Yet demining is still a condition for any development programme to take place and demining frees up land in a country that lack thereof. The problem here is strategic: by not embracing this double mandate, the organisation is increasingly seen as not relevant and falls into the cracks of donors' priorities. If properly articulated, this dilemma could be very fruitful for the organisation, which could play a strong role on both fronts.**

The following recommendations aim at addressing these weaknesses in order to strengthen the position of the MAPA and help it adjust to an evolving humanitarian and political context.

## **1. FOR UNMAS**

### **FUNDING and DONOR STRATEGY**

Increasingly struggling for funding, the MAPA is in a delicate situation. UNMAS' first priority is to find new ways to fund-raise. Increasing the pool of donors and looking for longer-term funding commitment are two priorities; so is building the capacities of IPs to raise funding independently.

❖ **Clarify communication with donors** – UNMAS and MACCA can be praised for being transparent and open with donors. Still, the documents used are usually not framed in a way that appeal to donors. That entails in particular:

- **Clarify both the humanitarian impact ('saving lives and reducing suffering') and the development impact as inherent to the work of the organisation.**
- Preferring results against targets to absolute numbers when listing the achievements of the MAPA over a certain period. As it is, it is often very difficult to know what the milestones the MAPA is working towards are and how close or far the programme is from these.
- Instead of focusing mainly on activities, include figures that show the increase in productivity of MACCA and of the MAPA as a whole or the reduction of cost of demining per square metres.
- Insist on indirect impact as well. Protection of IDPs for example is becoming increasingly salient for a lot of donors. The role of mine action in that regard should be more clearly demonstrated.
- Be transparent with donors about weaknesses: when it comes to gender mainstreaming, national ownership or VA for example, explain the reasons for lesser results and the measures taken to remediate these.

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<sup>142</sup> According to the Landmine Monitor, in 2012 with 766 victims for example, Afghanistan was still the country with the highest number of casualties, far above Columbia. See [http://www.themonitor.org/index.php/publications/display?url=lm/2013/sub/Casualties\\_and\\_Victim\\_Assistance.html](http://www.themonitor.org/index.php/publications/display?url=lm/2013/sub/Casualties_and_Victim_Assistance.html)

❖ **A 5-step Action Plan to mobilise development funding:**

1. **Identifying Case Studies** – Building on the Land and Livelihood Assessments, identify a few case studies illustrating the development impact of mine action.
2. **Quantifying Development Impact** – Collect precise qualitative and quantitative data to quantify this impact, following the methodology detailed above
3. **Prioritize job creation and private sector development when pitching to development donors** – Reach out to development donors with a clear pitch highlighting a) the existing impact of the programme on income generation, job creation and private sector development; b) the potential for a much stronger impact should the right links be made with development programmes.
4. **Aim at long-term funding** – Advocate for integrating demining, MRE and VA as a line in the budget of long-term development projects implemented in or near contaminated areas.
5. **Support linkages with development actors on the ground** – Support MACCA to develop a land release procedure that would include development actors operating in the area and include an information session for landowners on the potential for production of higher-income products and the solution for financing available.

❖ **Advocate for long-term funding commitment** – The punctuality and irregularity of funding received by the MAPA throughout the year represent an important opportunity cost that is costly for all actors of the MAPA, occupied at raising funds instead of implementing their activities.

❖ **Build up the capacities and responsibilities of other actors of the MAPA to raise funds** – While some IPs have taken on board the necessity to raise funds bilaterally, IPs are not equally successful at fund raising. UNMAS should organise a workshop with IPs and MACCA focusing specifically on the necessity of fund-raising and training IPs on how to do so efficiently.

❖ **Support the DMC's effort to advocate within the government of Afghanistan more actively** – It is an achievement to have transferred the responsibility of advocating for mine action with the government to the DMC. Yet, it must not be to the detriment of funding and key milestones in the government agenda should be flagged by UNMAS and a strategy should be discussed with the DMC to avoid repeating the mistake of the NPPs.

## ADVOCACY

❖ **Alert donors on the risk of not meeting the 2023 deadline should the drop in funding continue** – As states are legally bound to support the MAPA for it to achieve the Ottawa obligations, it is necessary for representatives of donors in country to alert their HQ about the impact that the decreasing funding may have on the deadline.

❖ **Focus advocacy efforts on the risks becoming increasingly salient in Afghanistan** – including IEDs, firing ranges and ERWs. While not everything can be dealt with by the MAPA for obvious reasons of neutrality, UNMAS can still inform key partners within and outside the UN on what the concerns are for civilian populations in the post-2014 Afghanistan. If IEDs fall under the mandate of the Afghan police, a serious effort of training and equipment must be made. UNMAS should identify the right partners (EUPOL, UNAMA, etc.) and raise a flag on this issue.

❖ **Advocate for the establishment of a steering committee with the government and other relevant UN agencies, including UNDP, UNICEF and WHO** – as showed above, one of the main legacies of UNMAS is the quality of the staff it trained from the field level to MACCA level. Losing these capacities would be a real blow for the country. As funding decreases and more deminers and staff are let go, a committee to think strategically on how to optimise the use of this staff would be useful. Their high level of acceptance, high technical skills and ability to follow strict procedures could be used for other types of programmes in the country, including health or education programmes.

## 2. FOR MACCA

MACCA has demonstrated its strengths and ability to lead the MAPA in the right direction, a real achievement in and of itself. The present evaluation identified the following areas of improvement for the organisation:

### PROGRAMMING

#### Improve pre-implementation processes

❖ **Find innovative ways to record women's needs and perceptions during surveys** – As mentioned above, the understanding of women-specific needs and priorities is still quite low in the MAPA. This is mostly due to the absence of female surveyors in the field.

- When it is possible to send women (secure, relatively close areas), push for the recruitment of female surveyors. The recruitment and training of capable relatives of surveyors should be prioritised in the short-term to go round the additional budget linked to the necessity to have a *mahram*.
- Organise phone interviews with trained female surveyors. When in the field, surveyors working with IPs should explain to community leaders the necessity for the organisation to record women's perceptions and get the approval from community leaders and relatives for phone calls to be made directly to a representative number of women in the community, making sure to have a variety of age groups and marital status.

❖ **Tighten the identification of vulnerable groups at the community level** –

- Build a system of alerts through the network of community liaisons to identify groups at risk and trigger emergency actions. In particular, develop awareness of one focal point in each affected community that is on the migratory groups of nomads. The focal point should be responsible for informing nomads of the risks and exact location of hazards. The focal point should also be responsible for alerting the regional offices of the potential risks coming.
- Identifying nomadic routes and assess whether nomads graze their livestock in contaminated areas should be part of the surveys.
- Along the same lines, community liaison officers should be trained to pay extra attention to the risks young boys are exposed to and to take immediate actions through the community to mitigate these risks.

#### Keeping high standards of quality and efficiency

❖ **Revise the BSC to make it more discriminant** – As it is, the BSC is not refined enough as an instrument to capture some of the differences between IPs. Insert new variables in the BSC in order to better discriminate between IPs and ensure a push for more demanding work in the field. Include indicators taking into account donors' concerns, such as for example gender mainstreaming, impact measurement etc.

❖ **Reinforce Community-Based projects, and its monitoring**

- **Avoid resorting to CBD in areas particularly difficult to demine** – the evaluation found that the difference between CBD and non-CBD projects was limited in regards to safety, except for projects particularly difficult. This type of projects should remain in the hands of experienced deminers.
- **Breakdown QA and Programming data by CBD versus non CBD projects** – this will allow the QM department but also other departments of MACCA to monitor the impact of CBD on the quality of projects implemented and to identify rapidly weaknesses of CBD projects;
- **Draw lessons learned from past CBD projects** – Stakeholders from the MAPA have different views on CBD projects, their advantages and disadvantages. Organise a discussion to learn

lessons from past projects, taking into account the experience and feedback of communities involved.

- **Building on these lessons learned, insist on the community-based approach** – In a context of decreasing access and instability, CBD is an extremely useful and relevant tool for the MAPA. MACCA should continue encouraging this evolution.

Improve the quality of the prioritisation system by including new demographics left out, namely nomads and children collecting wood and scrap metal.

### Optimising the impact of demining on communities

❖ **Strengthen impact assessment procedures and tools** – As developed above, measuring the impact of demining on development efficiently can have a significant impact on the programme. The PDIA is not a perfect tool to do so and only gives partial data. MACCA, in consultation with the IPs and the DMC, should review the methodology to be able to measure impact more adequately. More importantly, it should develop the analysis of this data with the strategic goal of proving the direct and indirect impact of the MAPA to governmental actors and donors alike.

❖ **Optimise the impact of demining** – The MAPA is a humanitarian body and should remain so. Yet, by linking up with development actors and key stakeholders when land is released, the MAPA could help securing a more sustainable impact. Not all the land has to go to subsistence agriculture. The release of new cultivable areas should give the opportunity to development actors to inform farmers and communities about the options they have to develop their land; the existing mechanisms to fund potential productive investments and the key actors working in this field in the area.

### Achieving the process of autonomisation of IPs

❖ **MACCA and UNMAS should support the expansion of competitive bidding** – This system has proven efficient in decreasing the costs of demining over the years. It instigates a positive competition amongst IPs to the benefit of the MAPA as a whole. Yet, MACCA's role is to keep an eye on the trend to make sure that it does not affect the quality of the services delivered and that the competition does not disfavour IPs who have developed more robust and comprehensive procedures on cross-cutting issues such as impact assessment or gender.

### MRE & VA

❖ **Better include MRE and information about demining in clearance activities** – By systematically keeping MRE trainers informed of local demining initiatives, they can help answer questions and clarify misconceptions villagers may have. This would be especially useful in cases of community-based demining where individuals are permanently based in the communities they serve.

❖ **Choose key activities that the MAPA can oversee with regards to VA** – The current VA framework includes a variety of assistance measures that stretch the MAPA too thin. By refocusing on 4 or 5 of the 9 current areas, MACCA will enable other organisations to take the lead on some aspects of VA.

❖ **Create a set of outcomes and progress indicators for both MRE and VA activities** – MACCA's current efforts with regards to MRE and VA currently lack clarity and success or failure in this area needs to be tracked more efficiently by setting up specific targets and processes – especially for VA activities.

❖ **Develop a system of community liaison for VA** – Emergency care is very difficult to access in remote areas of Afghanistan. Training community liaison officers for emergency care would help fill this gap – at least as a palliative measure whilst the level of service delivery is still very low.

❖ **Identify and link up with effective livelihood programmes for survivors** – As mentioned above, providing livelihood opportunities is one of the most difficult area of intervention for humanitarian and development actors. Many training programmes fail at doing so. Rather than stretching its limited resources, the MAPA should aim at linking up with the existing programmes that have proved

successful (e.g. Mercy Corps in Helmand province, HELP in Herat province, NRC-YEP in Herat, Nangarhar or Faryab provinces). Pushing for disability and mine accidents to be part of the beneficiary selection criteria for these organisations would be a more cost-effective way to support socio-economic reintegration than setting up independent training with little hope of success from scratch.

## GENDER & ENVIRONMENT

❖ **Ensure a rapid implementation of the Gender Strategy and monitor progress based on the indicators** – MACCA had made some progress in the implementation but the process is still slow and it has further stalled with the departure and hiring of a new gender focal point. It is important for MACCA to make sure that the strategy does not go unheeded and to regularly keep track of progress. Mainstreaming gender will not be an easy task in a programme like the MAPA; this will require MACCA's constant attention and commitment.

❖ **Include indicators of gender mainstreaming in the BSC** – Changing habits and mainstreaming gender in the MAPA is not easy task. The IPs should be incentivised to take the gender strategy on board. The BSC is a good instrument to instil changes at the organisational level. The indicators developed in the strategy can be used to adjust the BSC.

❖ **With the support of an expert, assess the environmental impact of mine action activities** – MACCA must go through a thorough review of its processes in the field to assess the environmental impact each activity has. At this stage, MACCA does not have the expertise to do so in-house and this will require hiring an external consultant. The consultant's mission will be to assess whether the environmental issue is significant – and requires action – or marginal, and to identify which processes are problematic or should be changed.

## NATIONAL TRANSITION

❖ **Develop interactions and synergies at the field level** – The geographic coverage of ANDMA in the provinces and its capacities in emergency response assessment could be useful for the MAPA to identify emergency situations early and mitigate the risks linked to sudden movements of population. Building the capacities of the DMC to conduct QA would also be a way to increasingly phase out this activity and decrease costs for MACCA, at least at the regional level. On the other hand, MACCA's expertise in mapping, risk analysis and planning would be extremely helpful for an agency like ANDMA and could be used as a basis for a stronger partnership.

### 3. FOR THE DMC AND THE GOVERNMENT OF AFGHANISTAN

❖ **Focus on advocacy efforts with the highest levels of government** in order to increase governmental interest in mine action. Develop early ties with the new administration to come to increase the importance of mine action on the governmental agenda. Advocacy efforts should aim at transferring the responsibility of mine action to a high-rank governmental actor who would have the influence to keep it high on the governmental agenda.

❖ **Link up with MACCA to develop key talking points about the impact of demining on development to be used with governmental actors** – The government is more interested in development issues than the humanitarian agenda, mostly in the hands of foreigners. Demonstrating impact and communicating about it will be useful to raise the profile of mine action amongst governmental stakeholders.

❖ **Advocate for the mine action law to pass to clarify the legal grounds of mine action in the country.**

❖ **Appoint a focal point for mine action within each of ANDMA’s regional office.** The focal point should not be the head of office but a staff member trained and dedicated to mine action. If possible, recruit someone with experience of work within the MAPA.

#### 4. FOR INTERNATIONAL DONORS

❖ **Keep funding MACCA through the VTF** – As demonstrated by this evaluation, MACCA is the cornerstone of mine action in the country and it will remain so until the DMC is able to take over. For the country to meet its obligations, it needs the constant monitoring of a robust coordinating body. MACCA has proven its impact on the programme. Leaving the MAPA in a delicate funding position just means postponing the problem and increasing the risks.

❖ **Integrate mine action into multi-year funding plans** – the MAPA is bearing a huge opportunity cost linked to the irregularity of funding it receives throughout the year and the necessity for many actors to allocate time to fund-raising instead of implementation. Furthermore, punctual funding makes it more difficult for UNMAS to support longer-term reform of the MAPA, as gender mainstreaming or VA would naturally be the first initiatives to be cut down when funding is lacking.

❖ **Advocate for the GIROA to legislate on the status of mine action in a country to increase its sustainability** – A legal framework and delineation of responsibilities between actors of the MAPA are necessary to avoid losing all the gains made in a future that is relatively uncertain. Donors should advocate for the Mine Action Law to be put back on the legislative agenda.

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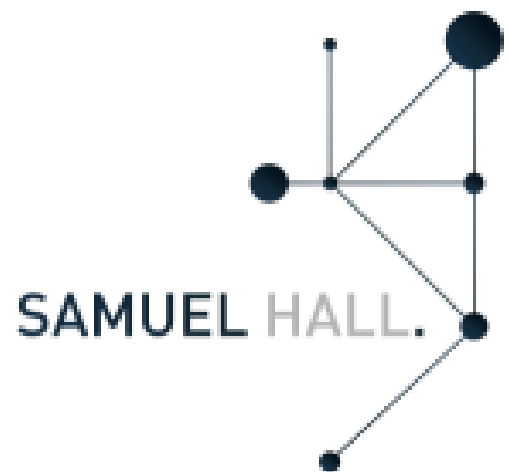
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