



**Mine Action Coordination Centre for Afghanistan
Supported by the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan
and the United Nations**



**Mine Action Programme for Afghanistan
Mine Action Strategic Guideline
2008-2013**



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Abbreviations

ALIS	Afghanistan Landmine Impact Survey
AMAC	Area Mine Action Centre
AMAS	Afghanistan Mine Action Standards
ANBP	Afghanistan's New Beginnings Programme
ANDMA	Afghanistan Nation Disaster Management Authority
ANDS	Afghanistan National Development Strategy
ARTF	Afghanistan Reconstruction Trust Fund
CBMC	Community-Based Mine Clearance
CIDA	Canadian International Development Agency
IWP	Coordinated Plan
DMC	Department of Mine Clearance
ERW	Explosive Remnants of War
GoA	Government of Afghanistan
IMAS	International Mine Action Standards
IMSMA	Information Management System for Mine Action
JCMB	Joint Coordination and Monitoring Board
LIAT	Landmine Impact Assessment Team
MACA	Mine Action Centre for Afghanistan
MAPA	Mine Action Programme for Afghanistan
MDG	Millennium Development Goal
MoE	Ministry of Education
MoLSAMD	Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs, Martyrs and Disabled
MoPH	Ministry of Public Health
MRE	Mine Risk Education
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
NMAA	National Mine Action Authority
PSC	Programme Support Costs
RFP	Request for Proposal
SHA	Suspected Hazardous Area
SOP	Standard Operating Procedure
UNMAS	United Nations Mine Action Service
UNOPS	United Nations Office for Project Services
VA	Victim Assistance
VTF	Voluntary Trust Fund

Acknowledgement

This document owes much to the input of Mr Ted Paterson of the Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining GICHD

Explanatory Note Regarding the use of MACA and MAPA

This strategy has been prepared by the Mine Action Centre for Afghanistan (MACA) on behalf of the Mine Action Programme for Afghanistan (MAPA).

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Mine Action Programme for Afghanistan (MAPA) is the first mine action programme in the world, and encompasses all pillars of mine action: advocacy, demining (survey, marking and clearance), stockpile destruction, mine risk education (MRE), and victim assistance (VA). Funded both bilaterally and through the UN Voluntary Trust Fund (VTF), over 20 mine action implementing organisations are working in Afghanistan, employing over 8,000 personnel. Mine action services reach almost every corner of the country. The programme is coordinated by the UN supported Mine Action Centre for Afghanistan (MACA) in Kabul.

The MAPA has a twenty year history of successfully delivering mine action in Afghanistan and has cleared over 12,000 hazard areas throughout the country. Over the next 5 years, it will concentrate on removing the remaining hazard in the country.

The major 1388 integrated operational plan deliverables are:

- Survey, marking and clearance of 128 sq km of hazardous area at 946 sites located in 484 mine/explosive remnants of war (ERW) affected communities;
- Provision of mine risk education (MRE) for 362,000 people at risk in the 484 affected communities, for 2300 impacted communities through media and school activities¹ and for at least 195,000 returnees at UNHCR assistance centres by the end of 1388 (March 2010);
- Partnership with the Government of Afghanistan's (GoA) Department of Mine Clearance (DMC) and on behalf of the GoA's Inter-Ministerial Body (IMB) for Mine Action, to plan, coordinate, contract implementers, quality manage and support mine action activities in Afghanistan in line with strategic goals to achieve the Afghanistan Compact and Ottawa Treaty obligations;

¹ There maybe in this transitional period some cross over between direct MRE activities conducted by field MRE teams and MoE School teachers. Media related activities are also part of MRE transition.

- Transition to DMC the authority for the following:
 - Accreditation of mine action entities working in Afghanistan
 - Custody and maintenance of Afghanistan Mine Action Standards (AMAS)
 - Quality Assurance monitoring
 - Coordination of MRE with the Ministry of Education
 - Final signoff cleared/cancelled land
 - Preparation of Article 7 Reporting for Ministry of Foreign Affairs

- Develop and publish with DMC, other Government Departments & UNMAS the following:
 - UN mine action in Afghanistan transition plan
 - IMB mine action in Afghanistan transition plan
 - DMC capacity development plan;

- Establish a contracting entity within DMC or Afghanistan National Disaster Management Authority (ANDMA)

COORDINATION AND CONSULTATION

In 2002 the Government of Afghanistan entrusted interim responsibility for programme coordination to the United Nations, but as of January 2008 the Government through the modality of an IMB for Mine Action also designated the DMC under the ANDMA to work jointly with MACA. MACA and DMC will be in 1388 jointly responsible for the coordination of all mine action activities – including planning goals for all assets (regardless of their funding modality/source), and quality assurance (QA). During 1388 DMC will take over responsibility for the following coordination activities: accreditation of implementers; maintenance of Afghanistan Mine Action Standards (AMAS); coordination of external quality assurance checks; lead coordination role for MRE with Ministry of Education; the audit of land cleared and cancelled; and preparation of the Article 7 Report for submission to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. In addition MACA and DMC will develop and publish a comprehensive UN to Government transition plan and assist the IMB to develop and publish a

mine action transition plan. DMC with MACA assistance will develop a DMC specific capacity development plan including a contracting capacity inside DMC. MACA will also contract manage mine action implementation using VTF funding on behalf of the UNMAS, UNOPS and the international donors to humanitarian mine action. MACA therefore has multiple mandates: it is an UNMAS project executed by UNOPS and carries a humanitarian mandate to ensure the mine action services funded via the VTF are delivered in a safe, efficient, and effective manner. It also has a mandate to oversee and coordinate the broader MAPA in partnership with the GoA in a responsibility confirmed by the IMB in February 2008. Based on both the expressed desire of the Government, and the UN strategic goal of assisting in the development of national institutions, MACA is also responsible for transitioning authority for mine action to the Government and support the GoA in its efforts to develop the requisite capacities to manage the MAPA.

SCOPE OF THE PROBLEM

The widespread and indiscriminate use of mines during more than two decades of conflict has left Afghanistan as one of the most heavily contaminated countries in the world. As of August 2008 4,924 hazardous areas totalling an estimated 720 square kilometres of land, impacting 2,229 communities remain in the country. If the requirements of the 1388 portfolio are met as well as those in 1387, over 200 km² of contaminated land will have been removed from the database by March 2010.

445 victims of landmines and explosives remnants of war have been recorded in 2008 (January through July). The vast majority of the victims are male, and almost 50% of the victims are children. The number of victims is declining year on year speaking to the success of clearance and MRE but much remains to be done.

Mines and ERW not only threaten Afghans with physical harm, they also rob farmers of their livelihoods and impede housing, resettlement, and the grazing

of livestock. Seventy-five percent of the impacted communities are found in 12 of the country's 34 provinces.

Approximately 2.7% of all Afghans are severely disabled, with landmine and ERW accidents accounting for around 8.6% of this total.² The impact of disability on economic participation is substantial, impoverishing survivors and their families, straining government and other health care systems, and limiting economic growth and poverty reduction.

STRATEGY

In order to effectively support the Government of Afghanistan in the achievement of its mine action goals, MACA and DMC must address a range of integrated sub-components reflecting its multiple mandates and roles. These sub-components identify activities to be achieved over time, with each contributing to the overarching Government developed Mine Action Strategy, and additional related strategies in areas such as education and disability programming. Whilst all of the supporting activities are inter-related, progress towards their achievement is not a linear process. In particular, the critical operational outputs of demining, MRE and VA must be effectively sustained, and not pegged to progress on transitional issues.

In outline form, the key components consist of the following: Transition Sub-Strategy; Demining Operations Reform Sub-Strategy; Mine Risk Education Sub-Strategy; Victim Assistance Sub-Strategy; and Support to Capacity Development Sub-Strategy. These strategies are explained in broad terms in the MACA strategic plan document that sets the tone for the development of documents such as the UN Transition Plan.

The 2009 the clearance strategy for Afghanistan is focused on achieving the Afghanistan Compact and the Afghanistan National Development Strategy (ANDS) benchmarks:

² National Disability Survey of Afghanistan, Ministry of Public Health, Central Statistics Office, Handicap International Report, 2005

- By March -2011, the land area contaminated by mines and unexploded ordnance will be reduced by 70%;
- all stockpiled anti-personnel mines will be located and destroyed by end-2007 (achieved); and
- By end-2010, all unsafe, unserviceable and surplus ammunition will be destroyed.

BACKGROUND

The mine action operating environment in Afghanistan has been one of substantial and continuous change since the inception of the programme in 1989. This has involved shifts in a wide range of external and internal factors including changes in the political and security landscape, deterioration of the socio-economic situation, and changes in the level and focus of engagement with Afghanistan within the international community. Very considerable investment in mine action has been made by international donors since the start of the programme³

Within the programme itself, and the Mine Action Centre for Afghanistan (MACA) in particular, there have also been a range of major evolutions in terms of management structure and approach. This has involved strengthening of the oversight and planning elements of the Centre, implementation of a nationalisation process, and an ongoing shift towards focus on core coordination roles.

Within the implementing partners, a range of adjustments have been initiated and in most cases completed, including the regionalisation of NGO focus, the streamlining of management processes and structures, and the implementation of operational adjustments including a shift to 'one man - one lane' drills, a toolbox approach, and integrated survey capacity. In conjunction with the MACA refocus onto its core coordination functions there has also been an increased emphasis on the empowerment of the implementing partners, and promoting the management ownership of the planning, implementation and quality oversight process.

³ See Landmine Monitor reports <http://www.icbl.org/lm/>

The operational activities of the MAPA are underpinned by development of a comprehensive understanding of the contamination problem at the national level, and the effective utilisation of the information management system and supporting processes. In 1387 this has enabled the establishment of a focused and proactive planning process within the MACA that sets the priorities for work across the country, tasking the existing operational partner assets on the areas of greatest need. Over the three year period 1387 to 1389 the implementation tasking process will be change managed to a system of partners owning the design and operational implementation of their projects. The MACA will verify that proposed projects fit within the national strategy, and will quality assurance the delivery of projects against key indicators and work plans.

Based on the knowledge of the hazard, a competitive tendering process has also been introduced for the first time by the MACA in Afghanistan, enabling the targeted clearance of complete areas by new partners. Additionally, due to issues of inaccessibility within some areas, the programme is working towards the establishment of a community based demining approach focused on the south, south east and south west of the country. It is anticipated that this will increase the reach of the programme, and resulting socio-economic benefits, into areas where limited other development or humanitarian assistance is provided.

The Government of Afghanistan has recently taken steps towards taking full national ownership of the problem. This intent was formalised by the formation of an Inter-Ministerial Body for Mine Action at the Minister level in February 2008, and the identification by this group of the Department of Mine Clearance (DMC) as the lead government agency. Since that time, MACA has commenced merging with the DMC and the establishment of protocols and processes to support this integration are under development. Within the Mine Risk Education and Victim Assistance sectors, transition to Government ownership is already well progressed, with MACA funded Support Units

working on issues ranging from advocacy for person with disability to curricula development.

This wide range of processes, activities and objectives requires the development of robust and considered supporting strategies and plans to ensure success. The United Nations intends to develop and implement such plans, in partnership with the Government of Afghanistan and the programmes key stakeholders. The maintenance of consistent levels of funding will be critical to this process, and to assisting the country in reaching its goals defined under the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention, and the Afghanistan Compact.

The Political and Security Situation in Afghanistan

In the 1970s, Afghanistan transitioned through a succession of military and civilian governments, which led to increasing periods of insecurity in the country to the Soviet intervention in 1979 in support of the pro-Soviet regime.

Afghanistan became one of the major theatres of the cold war, with the Mujahedin and their western backers fighting the Soviet army over a period of ten years. Soviet forces withdrew following the 1988 Geneva Accords, leaving a Russian-backed government in place. However, conflict between Government and Mujahedin forces continued until the fall of Kabul in 1991. Unfortunately, this led to a complex civil war among various Mujahedin factions.

Between 1994 and 1996, the Taliban rose to prominence in Afghanistan, gaining control of the southern provinces and eventually capturing Kabul in September 1996. The Taliban governed the bulk of the country (with the rest controlled by the Northern Alliance) through until October 2001, when a combination of US-led Coalition and Northern Alliance forces forced them from power.

With the fall of the Taliban an interim Government was formed under the leadership of Hamid Karzai. After consultation through the Loya Jurga, a

constitution was approved, enabling presidential elections later that year that were won by Hamid Karzai. This was followed by elections for the national assembly and provincial councils in 2005. (The next elections in Afghanistan are scheduled to occur within the next 18 months.)

The country currently faces an ongoing insurgency, with Government and Coalition forces engaged in ongoing combat operations in a number of the Southern and Eastern provinces. The re-establishment of government authority will ultimately depend on the ability of Government and its international allies to regain public confidence by delivering security and other essential public services, such as demining, throughout Afghanistan.

The growing and harvesting of poppies in the south, estimated to produce 93% of the world's opium, adds further complexities. The profits from this trade are considered to be fuelling the insurgency and supporting criminal activities such as smuggling and drug trafficking. The high world commodity prices for wheat coupled with lower farm-gate prices for opium may provide an opening for the replacement of poppies by legal crops.

The ongoing security issues make it difficult and, in some areas, impossible for government agencies and NGOs to deliver essential public services in parts of the country. However, mine action is considered by most Afghans of all persuasions to be a task that transcends political or ethnic differences. This allows mine action organisations to operate within humanitarian space that is denied to most other organisations. Even so, in the past year, deminers have been attacked by insurgents or criminals, forcing the mine action organisations to curtail or adjust operations in parts of the country.

Landmine and Explosive Remnants of War Contamination

The widespread and indiscriminate use of landmines during more than two decades of conflict has turned Afghanistan into one of the most heavily contaminated countries in the world. Afghans are living in some 2,500

contaminated communities⁴. Records for over 700 km² of suspected hazardous areas (SHA) exist, and additional hazards continue to be reported.

The number of Afghans falling victim to ERW and mines has been in decline over the years due in part to clearance and MRE efforts. The vast majority of the victims are male, and almost 50% of the victims are children. However the victim rate is still unacceptably high.

Figure 1 – Landmine & ERW casualties

Injured/Killed Victims	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008*	Total
Afghans Killed by Mines/ERW	123	182	128	179	124	149	149	1,034
Afghans Injured by Mines/ERW	1,151	678	726	866	696	459	425	5,001
Total	1,274	860	854	1,045	820	608	574	6,035

Note: * Total for 2008 victims as at 26 Oct 08

Mines and ERW have a major impact directly on livelihoods at the community level. At national level they can be a major constraint to strategic development projects such as power lines, roads and pipelines.

Approximately 2.7% of all Afghans are severely disabled, with landmine and ERW accidents accounting for around 8.6% of this total.⁵ The impact of disability on economic participation is substantial, impoverishing survivors and their families, straining government and other health care systems, and limiting economic growth and poverty reduction.

The Mine Action Programme for Afghanistan (MAPA)

The MAPA was the first ‘humanitarian’⁶ mine action programme in the world, and encompasses all pillars of mine action: advocacy, demining,⁷ stockpile

⁴ Note as progress is made these numbers constantly change. Real time figures can be obtained from the Mine Action Coordination Centre (MACA) in Kabul.

⁵ National Disability Survey for Afghanistan, Handicap International, Central Statistic Office, and the Ministry of Labor Social Affairs, Martyrs and Disabled: 2005.

⁶ In the mine action field, ‘humanitarian’ normally means ‘non-military’.

⁷ Demining comprises survey, marking, and clearance.

destruction, mine risk education (MRE), and victim assistance (VA). Over 20 mine action organisations work in Afghanistan, employing over 8,000 personnel. Mine action services reach almost every corner of the country.

Within this context, and given the scope of the contamination plus the number of implementing agencies and donors involved, the Government of Afghanistan entrusted interim responsibility for programme oversight to the United Nations,⁸ which implements this complex undertaking through the MACA until a suitable national programme management capacity is built. MACA is responsible for the coordination of all mine action activities – including planning, management, and quality assurance (QA) – on behalf of the Government.

MACA is a project of the United Nations Mine Action Service (UNMAS), which serves as the UN focal point for mine action globally. The project is executed by the United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS), which provides contracting, procurement, and financial management, plus technical and legal assistance.

MACA employs national personnel and international staff to coordinate and provide support to mine action operations through its headquarters in Kabul and Area Mine Action Centres (AMAC) that are staffed entirely by Afghans. AMAC are located in Kabul, Herat, Kandahar, Mazar-i-Sharif, Kunduz, Gardez, and Jalalabad⁹. They work directly with the impacted communities, government representatives, UN offices, and aid organizations in the area.

⁸ This was agreed via a Letter of Understanding between the UN SRSG and the Transitional Authority of Afghanistan (the Afghanistan Assistance Coordination Authority – AACA) on 2 June 2002.

⁹ The AMAC locations give the MACA a good fit with other Governmental structures. The manning of each office varies with the requirement.



Previous Evolutions in Mine Action¹⁰

Given the rapidly shifting environment in which it has operated, coupled with the evolution of the mine action industry globally, the MAPA has had to manage a number of major evolutions since its establishment. Key milestones have been:

- 1988-89 transition in operational concept – initial concept to train and equip ‘village deminers’ shifted to the support of Afghan mine action NGOs, supported by UNOCHA, based in Islamabad;
- 1992-94 – Afghan mine action NGOs open offices in Afghanistan;
- 1997 – Establishment of Regional Mine Action Centres within Afghanistan to coordinate operations;
- 2002 – Relocation of MACA from Islamabad to Kabul and transfer of responsibility from UNOCHA to UNMAS.

This last evolution was particularly difficult because new financial, administrative, logistics, and information management units had to be established in Kabul at the same time as dozens of embassies and aid agencies were relocating to that city. Additionally, the MAPA had to respond

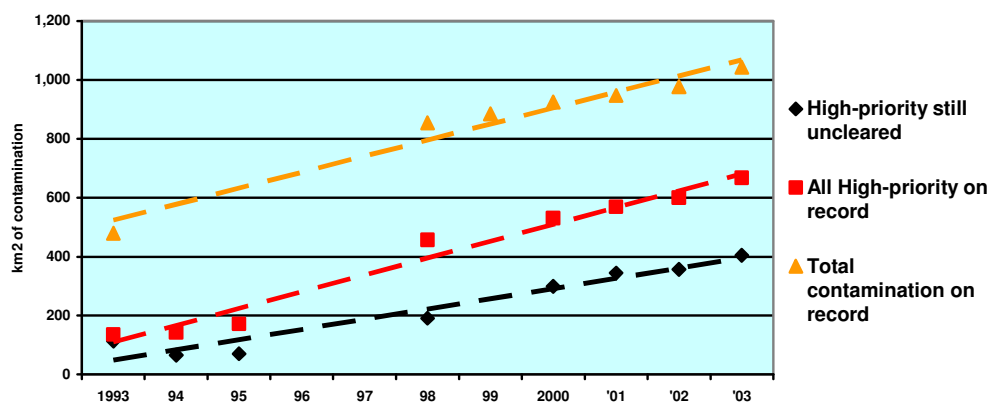
¹⁰ GICHD evaluation

rapidly to locate and clear cluster munitions dropped by U.S. forces, and to provide demining support to many large reconstruction projects. For some years therefore, MACA was reacting to crises,¹¹ leaving little time to put in place the robust management systems required to manage a complex programme in a difficult environment. Starting in 2005, increased attention was given to stabilising and strengthening management systems, while more recently in 2007, a new management structure and team was put in place.

The Evolving Contamination Picture¹²

Over the past 18 years, the MAPA has cleared almost two-thirds of all the suspected hazards discovered to date, including all known contamination within urban areas. However, Afghanistan is a large country with many inaccessible areas due to ongoing conflicts and the absence of roads. Each year, new hazards have been discovered because (i) on-going conflicts, (ii) access of survey teams into previously insecure areas, and (iii) the return or resettlement of displaced people to new or abandoned communities, who subsequently encounter hazards. As a result, the records on remaining suspected hazard areas (SHA) continued to grow for over a decade, in spite of the clearance achievements.

Figure 2 – Evolution of the contamination picture



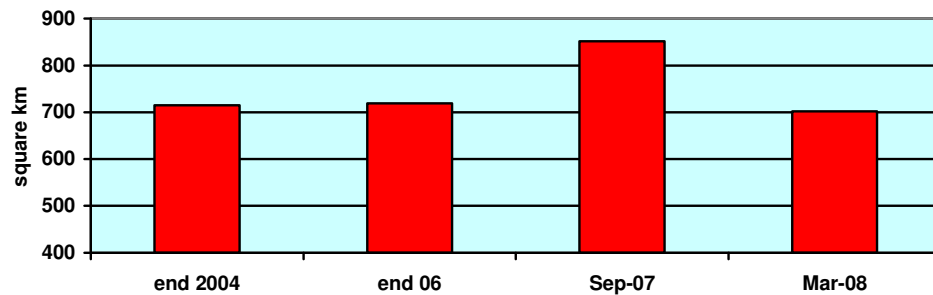
This trend was broken with the completion of the Afghan Landmine Impact Survey (ALIS) in 2005, which reduced the SHA on record to 715 km².

¹¹ Alistair Craib et al. 2002, *Assessment of the MACA and MAPA* [report for the Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) and the British Department for International Development (DFID)]

¹² GICHD evaluation

However, on-going survey efforts have continued to discover previously unknown SHA. As of 31 January 2006 (used as the baseline for tracking progress against clearance targets), there were 719 km² of known minefields and other SHA on record. This increased through 2006 and 2007, as new SHA were discovered faster than SHA were being cleared, peaking at 852 km² in September 2007, before falling again to 702 in March 2008.

Figure 3 – Area of suspected hazardous areas on record



A significant MAPA achievement has been the clearance of most of the dense belts of minefields around cities and strategic facilities, as well as all contamination in urban areas. Most of the remaining minefields are low density, for which it is difficult to establish clear boundaries. As well, thousands of small minefields and UXO hazards exist. Accordingly, over the past two years MACA has worked with the demining operators to reconfigure large demining teams into smaller and more flexible demining sections, many of which are cross-trained to perform explosive ordnance disposal (EOD) tasks, further enhancing flexibility.

MACA and the demining operators have also bolstered survey functions to ensure that expensive clearance assets are used only once the presence of landmines has been confirmed, and to release land as safe should investigations demonstrate that no hazards are present. Also, MACA and the operators have introduced new types of assets (e.g. demining machines) to expand the demining 'tool box' and ensure the most appropriate assets are available for the wide variety of demining tasks.

Emergence of national ownership and capacities¹³

A transition to government ownership has been envisaged ever since the Letter of Agreement with the Afghanistan Transitional Authority was signed in 2002. However, despite encouraging progress with respect to MRE and VA activities (discussed later), the many pressures facing senior government decision-makers have meant they have not yet addressed the complex policy issues relating to mine action.

Afghanistan did, however, become a State Party to the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on Their Destruction (the Ottawa Treaty) in March 2003. In doing so, the Government of Afghanistan (GoA) made a commitment to:

- Clear all emplaced anti-personnel mines by 2013;
- Destroy all known anti-personnel mine stockpiles by 2007;¹⁴ and
- Provide mine risk education to Afghans and assist mine survivors.

In 2003, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MoFA) was designated the lead agency for mine action. For some years, it chaired the Consultative Group (CG) for Mine Action¹⁵ and served as the focal point for reporting on Ottawa Treaty obligations. (With support from MACA, the GoA remains current with all reporting obligations.) CG members supported efforts to develop a draft mine action law, the final version of which specified that a semi-autonomous agency, reporting to an inter-ministerial board,¹⁶ would be established under the Office of the President to assume responsibility for mine action. By the end of 2006 however, it became clear that there was no consensus within the Council of Ministers concerning the make-up and reporting relationships for the national mine action organs.

¹³ GICHD evaluation

¹⁴ Afghanistan's New Beginnings Programme (ANBP), a project of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), leads stockpile destruction in partnership with the Ministry of Defence, with QA provided by MACA.

¹⁵ At that time, the GoA had established government-donor CG for all key sectors and cross-cutting issues, which fed into the Joint Coordination and Monitoring Board and, eventually, into the Afghan Compact process. CG now exists only for each 'pillar' of the Afghan Compact, and working groups feed into this CG. There now is a Mine Action Working Group reporting to the Security CG.

¹⁶ The Inter-Ministerial Board would serve as the National Mine Action Authority, responsible for policy, while the agency itself would serve as the National Mine Action Centre, responsible for implementation.

Within the past year, however, the Government has taken important steps towards assuming responsibility for mine action. The MACA, in partnership with the MoFA, organized a Mine Action Symposium in December 2007 to clarify the transition challenges and to take the first step towards establishing the key National Mine Action organs. The following decisions were taken:

- An Inter-Ministerial Body (IMB) for Mine Action would be established through the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to provide transition guidance and government oversight of MAPA operations.
- From now until 2013, the existing service delivery agencies (national and international NGOs and firms) will support the Government of Afghanistan in clearing all known mined areas, and delivering MRE, VA, and other mine action services to achieve the Ottawa Treaty benchmarks, using funding from the UN VTF and international donors.

On 16 January 2008 the Ministry of Foreign Affairs hosted the first meeting of the IMB. During this, members elected the Department of Mine Clearance (DMC) within the Afghanistan Nation Disaster Management Authority (ANDMA) as the focal point for mine action within the GoA^{17,18}. The IMB also agreed on the need for a strategy for transition and national ownership, to be developed in partnership with MACA.

Strategic imperatives¹⁹

While working towards the transition to Government responsibility for mine action policy and coordination, the MACA must continue to respond to the humanitarian and development constraints posed by contamination with an approach that ensures appropriate assets are directed to the areas of greatest need. MACA initiatives are designed to meet national and international targets.

The most recent strategy document for mine action was issued in May 2006. It was based on the GoA vision of a country free from landmines and ERW,

¹⁷ DMC was originally established by presidential decree in 1989, but it has never had the full capacity to discharge its responsibilities.

¹⁸ MoFA will continue representing the government vis-à-vis the Ottawa Treaty.

¹⁹ GICHD

where people and communities live in a safe environment conducive to national development, and where landmine and ERW survivors are fully integrated in the society and thus have their rights and needs recognized and fulfilled.²⁰ However, it was based on a number of critical assumptions which have not proven correct, including:

- The security level remains stable, and the situation improves all over the country
- Poppy eradication plans are, in some ways, effective and illicit activities do not impact the national security
- Central authority reaches all provinces
- Central government would gain the confidence of the international donor community through more robust control of financial resources

Accordingly, a new strategic approach is required based on the actual operating environment for mine action. This document will need to address the following strategic imperatives:

1. The need to eliminate the threats to lives and limbs, and the constraints to Afghanistan's reconstruction and development
2. The international treaty obligations assumed the GoA; in particular, the clearance of all known minefields by 2013
3. Targets set for mine action in the Afghan National Development Strategy (ANDS); in particular:
 - the area contaminated by mines and ERW will be reduced by 70% by end 2010
 - all stockpiled anti-personnel mines will be located and destroyed by end-2007²¹
4. The transition to national ownership

Many of the essential components of a new strategy have already been formulated and these are being implemented as described in following sections. However, to continue the transition process to national ownership, it is important that the new strategy for Afghanistan's national mine action

²⁰ *Mine Action in Afghanistan: The Way Ahead*, Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, Saur 1385 (May 2006).

²¹ This was achieved in October 2007.

programme be developed, in partnership with the DMC, and endorsed by the appropriate level of Government.

Achieving the Targets²²

It must be emphasised that the MACA has multiple mandates. It is an UNMAS project executed by UNOPS and, as such, carries a humanitarian mandate to ensure the mine action services funded via the VTF are delivered in a safe, efficient, and effective manner to reduce death and injury and mitigate risks to communities²³. It also has a mandate to oversee and coordinate the broader mine action programme for Afghanistan (MAPA) on behalf of the GoA in a responsibility confirmed by the Inter-Ministerial Body in February 2008.

Additionally, based on both the expressed desire of the Government, and the UN strategic goal of assisting in the development of national institutions, the MACA is also responsible for transitioning authority for mine action to the Government. Thus, the MACA has a mandate to (i) plan the transition from a UN-managed programme and (ii) support the GoA in its efforts to develop the requisite capacities to manage the MAPA.

Principal challenges²⁴

MACA faces a number of obvious challenges that must be addressed in a strategic manner. Key among these is:

- Insecurity – insecurity in large areas of Afghanistan precludes the effective delivery of essential public services, including mine action (which heretofore has been able to access areas denied to other humanitarian and development agencies). Innovative approaches are needed to work in insecure areas.
- Complexity – the MAPA programme comprises over 20 service delivery partners working on a variety of different explosives contamination problems, all within a challenging and rapidly evolving operating environment.

²² GICHD Evaluation

²³ As per the United Nations Inter-Agency Mine Action Strategy 2006-2010.

²⁴ GICHD Evaluation

- Ambitious performance targets – the targets set in the ANDS and, particularly, the Ottawa Treaty are ambitious, implying the need for substantial enhancements in efficiency, particularly with respect to demining.
- The inherent tension between MACA operational mandate and the responsibility to support GoA capacity development efforts – it is extremely difficult to put in place an organisational culture in which personnel balance the need to achieve short-term performance targets while devoting adequate time and effort to support the development of capacities for their government counterparts.
- Weak national ownership – officials in the Afghan government must assume the responsibilities of programme ownership. MACA personnel can create a conducive environment for national ownership to emerge, but they cannot make it happen – indeed, international experience is that attempts to accelerate the process by performing functions that should be discharged by government counterparts will lead to progress on paper but regress in reality.

MACA Strategy

In order to effectively support the Government of Afghanistan in the achievement of its mine action goals, the MACA must address a range of integrated sub-components reflecting its multiple mandates and roles. These sub-components identify activities to be achieved over time, with each contributing to the overarching Government developed Mine Action Strategy, and additional related strategies in areas such as education and disability programming. Whilst all of the supporting activities are inter-related, progress towards their achievement is not a linear process. In particular, the critical operational outputs of demining, MRE and victim assistance must be effectively sustained, and not held to progress on transitional issues.

In outline form, the key components consist of the following:

- Component 1 – Transition Sub-Strategy
- Component 2 – Demining operations reform Sub-Strategy

- Component 3 – Mine Risk Education Sub-Strategy
- Component 4 – Victim Assistance Sub-Strategy
- Component 5 – Support to Capacity Development Sub-Strategy

The main components are depicted diagrammatically in the following pages, with Figure 4 indicating the interrelationship between MACA and Government strategies, and Figure 5 outlining the baseline sub-sets of activity within each component. These are further elaborated in the following pages.

Figure 4 – Inter-related Government & MACA Strategies

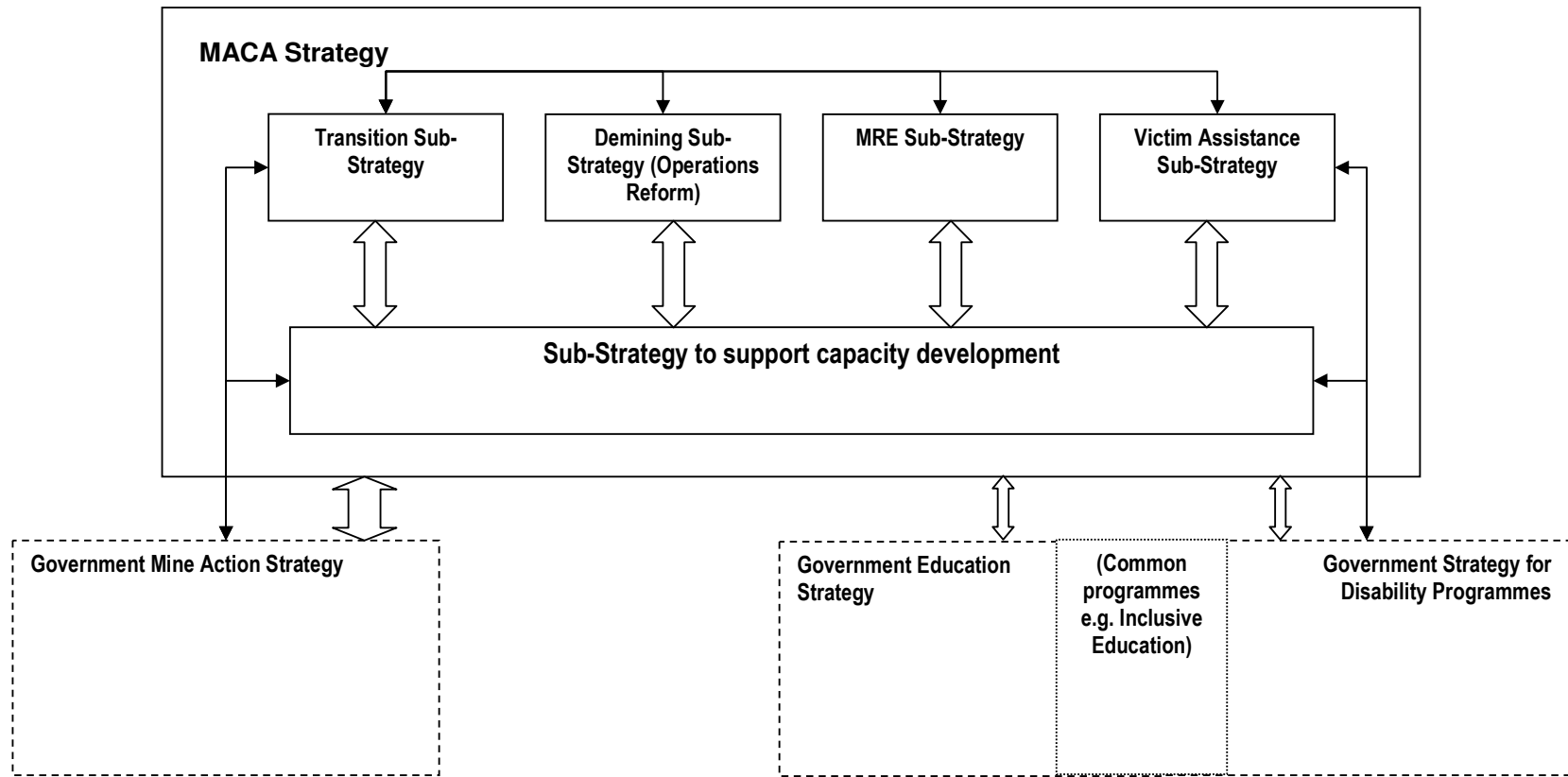
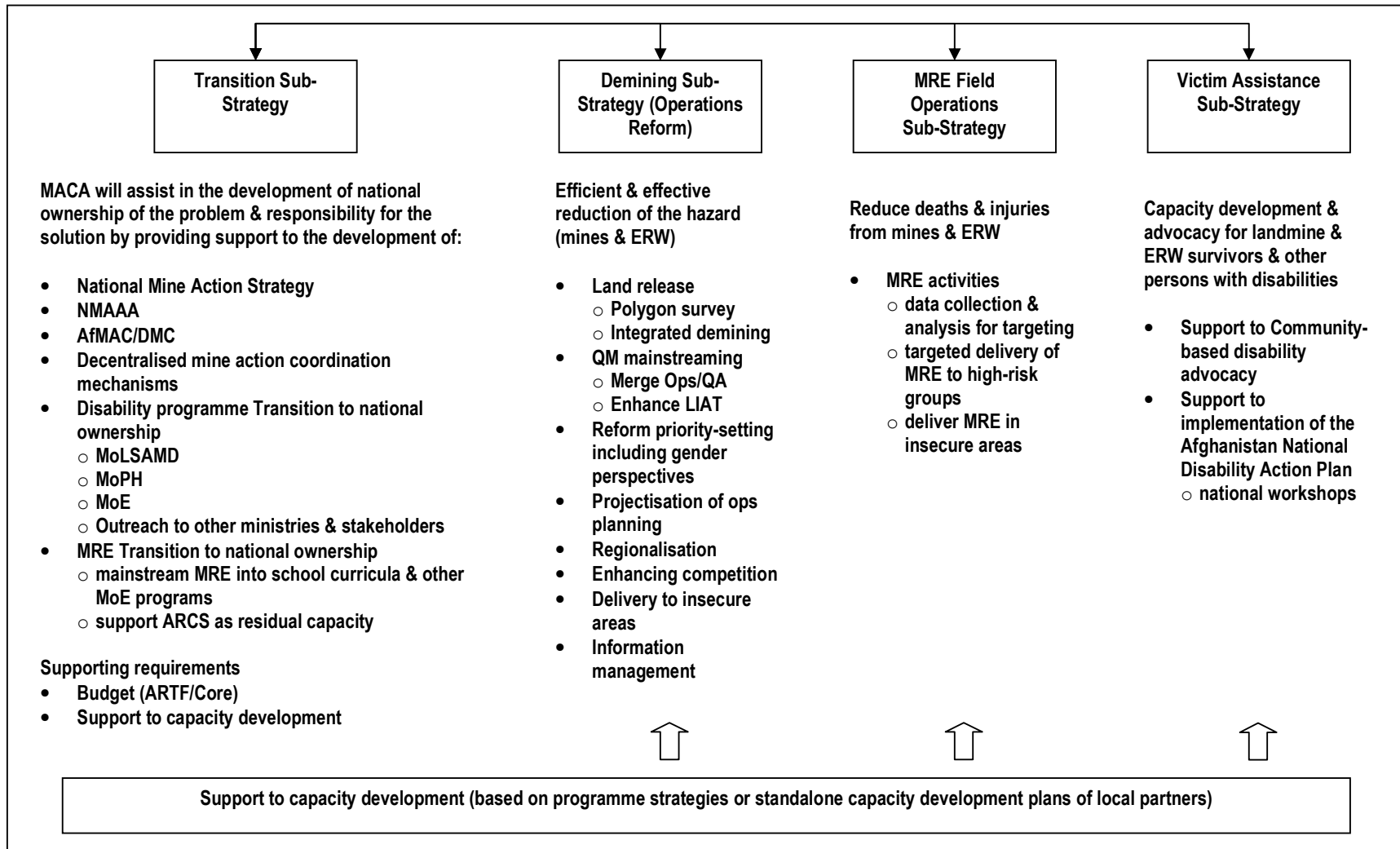


Figure 5 – Components of MACA Strategy



TRANSITION SUB-STRATEGY

Formulating a National Mine Action Strategy

The most essential task for the successful achievement of a transition to national ownership is the formulation of a national strategy for the mine action programme. While MACA will have a major role in this effort, it is essential that the many implementing partners and other stakeholders are involved, and that government ownership emerges through the process. What is needed is not a strategy devised by the MACA and its MAPA partners outlining what mine action services the programme is able to deliver (supply driven), but a government strategy outlining what the country needs MAPA to deliver (demand driven). A demand-driven strategy is required to make it clear what actions the government must take, in consultation with its international partners, to achieve the strategic goals they have adopted.

A national mine action programme strategy will need to confirm or modify the strategic goals, and address at least:

- The institutional framework, including the key national organs
- Given the diversity of Afghanistan, decentralisation policy and mechanisms for ensuring decisions are taken at the appropriate level
- Long-term resource requirements

ESTABLISHING NATIONAL ORGANS

International experience suggests that, in heavily contaminated countries, two mine action organs are required for a government to discharge its responsibility to address the landmine and ERW problem.

1. A national mine action authority – an inter-ministerial body (IMB) responsible for policy and for oversight of the country's mine action programme, and for ensuring the country is represented in international meetings (e.g. of States Parties to the Ottawa Convention) and meets its international obligations. An IMB did meet in January 2008 and agreed that the DMC should be the mine action focal point in the government. As

yet, however, the legal instrument (legislation or decree) formally establishing the IMB and outlining its roles and responsibilities is pending. The MACA will continue to work with the GoA, and particularly the DMC, to identify the Governments options for establishment of an appropriate authority and required supporting frameworks. .

2. A national mine action centre (MAC) – an agency responsible for implementing the policy established by the national authority and for providing policy research and secretariat services where the authority does not have a secretariat attached directly to it. Typical functions of a MAC include (at least) preparation of strategic and operational plans, coordination (of implementing organisations and with government agencies), accreditation and quality assurance, and information management. The DMC has been designated as the future institutional home for this role but does not yet have the capacities required for discharging these functions. The MACA has already assisted the DMC to collocate with MACA to allow DMC personnel to become more familiar with the functions of a MAC, so they will be in a position to formulate plans to develop the requisite capacities.

The impact of landmines and ERW is localised. Therefore, in a country as diverse as Afghanistan, it is essential that some decentralised mechanisms exist for coordination. At present, the AMAC are responsible for liaison with provincial and district governments, local communities, development agencies and NGOs, etc. 2007 was the last year that AMACS were responsible for the development of tasking plans. That system has been found to have some structural weaknesses²⁵ and has been changed to a method driven by strategic policy and data analysis at the central level. The target list of clearance sites is now generated in Kabul in agreement with DMC/ MACA agreed policy criteria. In 1388 implementing partners used the list to build projects within their areas of operations²⁶. The DMC has links with

²⁵ It was clear from analysis that for some years spatial ease of accessibility was biasing the delivery of clearance with the affect that remoter communities were being left out of plans.

²⁶ Changes are of course made to the plan as IP develop their work plans. The role of the AMAC is now to quality monitor progress against work plans and not to manage the daily moves of teams.

Afghanistan National Disaster Management Agency (ANDMA) personnel present in many provinces and districts. However, the linkages are not strong in many cases and ANDMA personnel have little experience with mine action. DMC will need to address this issue in its eventual capacity development plan, which the MACA will then support.

In addition, responsibility for both Victim Assistance and Mine Risk Education must be transferred to the GoA and these processes are well advanced. These transition achievements are discussed in subsequent sections.

Finally, there are measures required to support the transition process and the operations of any institutional authority and DMC led mine action centre over the long term. First, the financial support to such Government core elements needs to be clearly reflected in the national budget. Given its fiscal outlook, GoA contributions to mine action via the core budget will be modest over the medium-term, and funds may have to be channelled via the Afghan Reconstruction Trust Fund (ARTF). MACA, with DMC, will investigate options for such support.

Second, while national ownership implies that the GoA must plan to enhance its capacities to formulate and implement its mine action policy, the MACA will need to support the GoA capacity development efforts. As support for capacity development is a cross-cutting issue, it is discussed in a later section.

DEMINING SUB-STRATEGY (OPERATIONS REFORM)

Focused Clearance Operations

Returning land, once deemed to be hazardous, to the communities who own it requires that teams focus on the task. The removal of hazard can occur either through survey processes or a combination of survey, clearance and area reduction processes. The real ownership of hazard removal in whatever form must and does in Afghanistan rest with the impacted community. A

community must be satisfied that whatever actions have been taken is sufficient to remove the hazard.

All data associated with mine action is collated in the Information Management System for Mine Action (IMSMA) and additional stand-alone databases linked to IMSMA. These data sets are continuously updated. Currently the MACA holds these datasets and manages the monthly data audit functions and analysis processes. From 1388, MACA plans to share the datasets with the Central Statistics Office.

Textbox 1 – Mine Action Information Management in Afghanistan

MAPA was the first humanitarian mine action programme in the world. Accordingly, it had to develop its own information management system for the collection, compilation, and analysis of data on hazards and demining. This was called the Mine Action Management Information System (MAMIS). With the move to Kabul in 2002, and the decision to undertake a Landmine Impact Survey, it was decided to convert to the Information Management System for Mine Action (IMSMA) – a specialised software application offered by the Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining which now is used in over 40 countries. IMSMA version 3 is now in use in Afghanistan. The programme is converting to IMSMA version 5 in 2009.

This version has enhanced functionality and greater flexibility.

The MACA can analyse impacted communities in many ways, for example, by its physical proximity to communities or by the livelihood assets blocked by a hazard (water, agricultural land, etc.). MACA can also establish common problems within a cluster of communities. Further, MACA can estimate the size of all known hazards and extrapolate estimates of the time and resources required to remove individual hazards. More sophisticated analysis can also be done among the hundreds of data fields. The imperative is, however, to keep the data current. At field level, this activity is carried out by Landmine Impact Assessment Teams (LIAT).

Clearance, as a consequence of accurate and effective analysis of information, is the key activity of the MACA strategy – not only to meet international and national benchmarks, but also to fulfil the commitment of the Government of Afghanistan to its people to create a country free from the threat of landmines and ERW.

Hazard areas in Afghanistan can be described in one of two ways: either the site is a suspected hazardous area (SHA) or it is a defined minefield (MF). The difference is that an SHA largely reflects a community's fear of an area, and the true extent of the hazard may originally have been inflated due to this fear. A defined MF is a more precise measure of the area of hazard.

In the period 2004-8, HALO Trust piloted a process of conducting further investigative surveys at SHA sites. Working with the communities, it was able to reduce SHA size by 30% on average, thereby changing the status of an SHA into that of a MF with mapped boundaries. This method is now termed polygon survey.

A key component of MACA strategy of operations reform will be the conduct of a large scale polygon survey across the remaining accessible areas of Afghanistan.

Polygon Survey

In 2008, polygon survey activities were rolled-out; beginning in the north and northeast, and moving on to the west. Polygon survey will be implemented in the rest of the country in areas where security permits.

Textbox 2 – Planned progress in polygon survey

By the end of 2009, the polygon survey process will have been conducted at 3,159 hazard sites and it is expected that some 180 km² out of 598 km² (30%) of SHA will be released to communities without the need for costly clearance operations.

A technical appraisal can result in an SHA being removed from the database without any deliberate clearance act. This appraisal involves a high level of community participation to ensure information is validated and that the removal of the hazard from the database is accepted by the community. Thus, to cancel a portion of land and remove it from the database, the community must hold the opinion that the entire area, or part of the area, is no longer a threat. This process is fully recorded, and the documentation is scanned into the national database. At no point does a survey team act arbitrarily and remove a hazard without the community consultation process. In mine action, these processes are grouped under the terminology of land release.

At the same time as they defined the polygons, HALO Trust and MCPA survey teams will mark the minefield perimeters. This marking will take the form of limited signage and corner rock painting. There is no intention to fence or create a physical barrier.

Integrated Demining

Demining in Afghanistan utilizes a ‘tool box’ approach, drawing on a variety of clearance methods, including manual demining, mechanical demining for land preparation and area reduction, and the use of mine detection dogs. The strategy is to use the appropriate assets to identify as directly as possible either rows or clusters of mines. Thus, the assets are focused inward to the hazard. Once the rows or clusters are identified then either manual or mechanical assets will be used for clearance. Dogs may be used as a follow-up asset for quality assurance purposes.

Low density minefields/sporadically mined areas pose particular problems in demining. Therefore, on occasions, finding the mines in a timely fashion within the overall SHA is a major challenge. The MACA will continue to encourage innovative procedures to address this problem. It is possible that new generation ground penetration radar and combined metal detectors will provide partial solutions.

Mechanical Demining

The MACA plans within the timeframe of this strategy document to encourage the further use of intrusive demining machines. The MACA seeks to encourage projects in appropriate areas of the country where the intrusive machine’s capability becomes the leading element of the clearance process, and manual demining teams and dogs follow on after a machine led action.

This concept is being introduced because Afghanistan lacks the mechanical assets (either manned or remote) that can work intrusively within the actual mined area.

Most machines currently deployed are non-intrusive, working as tools that reach rather than drive into a mine area. The essential

difference is speed. Intrusive machines are faster and designed to be driven into the hazardous area, while a non-intrusive machine must clear itself forward or prepare the ground so another asset can clear the area before the non-intrusive machine can move forward.

Table 1 – Areas appropriate for intrusive machines

Region	m ²
South Eastern	3,342,848
Central	38,967,894
Eastern	3,225,777
Northern	422,969
North Eastern	361,744
Southern	886,882
Western	480,462
Total	40,233,069

Demining in Support of Reconstruction

Reconstruction projects and the development of new infrastructure are ongoing throughout Afghanistan. Mine clearance in support of reconstruction efforts is most often funded directly by the reconstruction project itself rather than through the VTF mechanism. It is often conducted on land that does not appear on the known minefield or SHA database. Most such demining operations are designed to verify the absence of landmines/ERW, primarily for insurance and duty-of-care reasons. In perhaps 20% of these cases, reconstruction activities cross into a known mined area.

The need for demining in support of reconstruction projects continues to increase, bringing with it associated actions required by the MACA. As the coordination body for all mine action on behalf of the GoA, MACA duties extend to these operations to ensure the reporting of locations, progress, and munitions encountered. When feasible, MACA also conducts quality assurance of the operations.

The Evolving Coordination Challenge

As new clearance methods are introduced, as planning techniques evolve, and as goals are achieved, the structure and processes of the demining programme will change. In the next four years, the MACA will undoubtedly change as an organization – losing some roles and perhaps gaining others.

The contractors associated with the programme will also likely undergo changes, based on:

1. More involvement of a range of partners in the 'humanitarian demining' programme through the introduction of targeted competitive tendering.
2. Development of a much more comprehensive community-based and time-bound approach that will shift around the country as districts are cleared.
3. Introduction of a focused mechanical clearance capacity.

Mainstreaming Quality Management

MACA structures and processes once separated Quality Monitoring and Operational Management. This was a useful approach until the capacities in both these functions were fully developed. After considerable review it was concluded that unintended consequences flowed from that structure. The most serious of these is the perception in some entities that quality is the responsibility of the Quality Inspector and not of the implementer. As quality must be inherent throughout all processes, MACA in 2008 converted all Quality Inspectors into Operations Officers, and incorporated the quality assurance duties into their job descriptions. This restructuring will affect both MACA headquarters and the AMAC.

ENHANCING LIAT TEAMS

LIAT teams are an integral part of the field investigative group of operations planners. They confirm details concerning impact of contamination and the planned use of areas that are to be demined. LIAT functions include community liaison, site investigation, clearance handover to communities, and post demining impact assessments. Teams will visit about 500 former minefields and battlefields each year²⁷.

²⁷ Although in the immediate term 2008 the LIAT process is required it is envisioned that the requirement will diminish over 2009 and will have been faded out by 2011 as currently structured

Textbox 3 – Post-demining impact²⁸ assessment

Post-demining impact assessment surveys began in May 2007. LIAT teams return to communities six months after demining has been completed. They work with residents and, using detailed questionnaires and participatory processes, determine if cleared land is being used by the intended beneficiaries for the expected purpose (agricultural, grazing, transport, residential or commercial purposes). If the land is not being used by the intended beneficiaries, they document why.

The teams also question villagers on the type and quantity of crops grown; the type of livestock and the number of months these used grazing land; the length, width, and traffic of cleared roads; the number of shops or restaurants built on land used for commercial purposes; and the number of houses rebuilt and households that benefit from demined land used for residential purposes. Once they understand what is produced from the cleared land, the team calculates economic benefits based on local market values. A rudimentary cost benefit analysis is derived from this process.

In future, MACA will use this monitoring information to inform the prioritization process for future clearance operations. The MACA plans to seek international expertise to enhance this mechanism.

In 2008 the MACA intends to look at livelihood analysis and instigate a number of small pilot projects to assess clearance planning and post-clearance impacts from the perspective of women in impacted communities.

The MACA will also investigate how to share and analyse MACA datasets with both the National Rural Vulnerability Assessment and the National Solidarity Programme.

Reform Priority-setting

The 1387 and 1388²⁹ Integrated Work Plans (IWP) are primarily influenced by: donor preferences; funding committed to the VTF; funds pledged to the VTF; and bilateral donor strategies outside of the VTF to service delivery partners.

The IWP is then shaped by the following criteria to establish priorities at the district and individual demining task levels:

- The 'killing zones'
- Hazards with 500m proximity of the centre of a community
- High impact communities

²⁸ The mine action community uses the term 'impact' to refer to any effects caused by explosives contamination or by the clearance of that contamination. In the results-based terminology used by development agencies, the benefits from clearance normally would be termed 'outcomes'.

²⁹ The Afghan year corresponds roughly to 1 April 2008 to 31 March 2009.

- Areas with cultural or other benefits
- Highly contaminated districts – focusing on the worst impacted³⁰
- Small minefields
- The ‘do-ables’ that quickly change the contamination map, and
- Focusing the effort on achieving the goals of the Afghan Compact and meeting the challenge of the Ottawa Treaty obligations.

Killing zones are hazard areas that ‘claim’ victims frequently or can be predicated using modelling to be the most likely areas where victims will be created in the future.

Hazards within 500 m of the centre of communities are self explanatory.³¹ The reason for removing SHA inside communities is a simple human response to a question: why should Afghans have to live in constant peril within their communities? Some of these sites are small and have been inside communities for as long as 20 years.

Highly impacted communities are those where there have been recent victims and/or where hazards block the uses of valuable land.³² The LIS impact score is not the definitive planning tool for mine action; it is a starting point that focuses attention on certain communities where additional investigation is required. A high LIS impact score does not in all cases translate into high priority.

Areas of cultural or other benefit are areas at or in which an international donor or the GoA have expressed a preference for clearance operations in support of a strategic objective beyond community development. An example of this is the 2008 clearance activities within Bamyan Province.

³⁰ There are four districts in Afghanistan that have over 75 hazards within them.

³¹ The MACA has taken into account Survey Action Centre (SAC) research showing that victims are more frequent at sites further from communities – these sites are picked up in the killing zone criterion.

³² The high impact scoring matrix comes from the Landmine Impact Survey (LIS) protocols in which community impacts are ranked by a score derived from the types of land blocked by hazards, and the number of victims in the previous two years.

Focusing on highly contaminated districts again needs little explanation other than the observation that for 19 years the programme has worked on high priority minefields in many highly impacted districts, but few of these districts have been completely cleared. The 1387 IWP addresses this and resources have been focused to attempt to bring work in some of these districts to a conclusion.

Across the country there are small minefields – an oddity because, for many years, demining teams in some organisations were too large to deploy on such sites and hence they were not included easily in planning processes. MACA requested UNOPS to adjust the contracts for 2008 to address this issue of team size and structure.

The converse to highly impacted districts is districts with few hazards. Over 100 districts in Afghanistan are contaminated by two or fewer SHA. Dispatching teams to clear these hazards, allowing the districts to be declared mine free, will bring future dividends (lower logistics costs) and allow progress in meeting treaty obligations.

Operations Planning Through Project Definition

The 1387 & 1388 IWP are shaped by the start of an initiative to split the hazard problem in Afghanistan into identifiable projects with clear defensible outcomes that mean something. In the past the programme has measured achievement / success in square metres cleared and mines/UXO cleared. These outputs are indicators towards progress but as productivity figures they have in the past tended to mask some of the more dynamic possibilities. This project identification process is the corner stone of future operational planning in Afghanistan

Regionalisation

Starting in 2008, implementing partners have been focused into overlapping regions of responsibility. In some instances this has meant an agencies moving completing out of some areas of the country. Regionalization of agencies and contractors promises numerous benefits, including:

- More rapid achievement of mine impact free status for entire districts and provinces
- Enhanced cost effectiveness
- The ready identification of gaps in service coverage
- Reduced exposure to insecurity
- Improved quality management with assets focused in geographical areas
- Enhanced “ownership” by implementing partners with their work areas

The MACA believes that ownership of process is a major component of both transition and capacity building that is relevant to the national authoritative and coordination structures and to the national implementing contractors. Regionalisation is part designed to empower this process. It can also be described as encouraging focus.

Enhancing Competition

The penultimate element of the 1387 IWP was the introduction of competitive tendering processes. This is not intended to commercialize mine action in Afghanistan. The process is one of asking both the NGO sector and the commercial sector to respond to Requests for Proposals (RFP). RFP have been issued for the complete clearance of Badghis Province and Shindand Districts in western Afghanistan. These are big impact projects designed to complete the clearance in these areas, thus ‘change the map’. To be competitive, commercial sector companies will have to take into account that the non-profit sector can respond provided that they stay within the rules of Afghan law plus the rules of the VTF and bilateral donors concerning the use of equipment that may have been donated. A much greater proportion of the 1388 IWP will be competitive. The MACA will monitor and assess the financial and structural impact of competitive processes. A report will be published by end 2009.

Service Delivery in Insecure Areas

The existing structures of some contractors are no longer appropriate for deployment into some areas of Afghanistan. This is based on the prevailing security situation particularly in areas in the south, south east and south west of the country, where existing organisations have been subject to violent attack, hijacking, and robbery resulting in the deaths and injury of a number of demining personnel. As such, based on consultation with implementing partners and other stakeholders, it was identified that a modified community based approach to mine action in these areas would likely be more appropriate.

Community-Based Mine Clearance (CBMC) approaches are not new to Afghanistan. As far back as 1989, the best approach for removing the contamination was thought to be training local villagers in Pakistan and deploying them back across the border to work within their own communities. This approach is still being used today and is considered a successful method of generating employment, capitalizing on indigenous security mechanisms and tribal structures and providing community ownership to the process and decision-making.

The traditional approach to CBMC has been to raise a demining team in one particular community that would then work on that community's unique problems. If there are no advantages or possibilities to group with another community, this single community approach will be taken. The new cluster concept being proposed would be adjusted by geographically grouping communities, with the intent of creating one or more demining teams drawn from the group. These deminers would, after training, deploy on the group's highest priorities and then over time shift to the lesser impacting hazards. Grouping communities will enable MACA to create greater employment opportunities across a wider area, whilst at the same time enhancing security and making savings in logistical support functions and some areas of management.

CBMC deminers are usually community members who already have occupations such as farming or shop keeping. The added income during their participation in these limited duration programmes stand to add needed income that can augment house hold incomes that will invest back into the community and likely expand productivity.

CBMC programme activity report back to the MACA in the same way as any other demining project as site supervisions and reporting remains the responsibility of the agency contract to provide and manage these assets. CBMC will take place throughout the country but a priority has been given to the south. To date MACA has received proposals for review for Hilmand Province (South), Ghor (West), Kunar (East) and Wardak (Central).

In addition, within a group of communities there are enhanced opportunities for targeted MRE and Governmental assistance to all persons with disabilities, not just those who are victims of mines or ERW. MACA envisages that the group approach will also enable the MACA to encourage and develop greater linkages between mine action and developmental programmes being implemented in Afghanistan, particularly at the local level.

MACA, along with the UN country team of organizations, believes it is imperative to push into areas considered at risk and look for alternate solutions to implement projects of all types. The MACA seeks to do just this through CBMC methodologies described above. Currently, there are community-based projects in Bagram in Kabul Province and Tora Bora in Nangarhar. The MACA intends to apply these same methods with some modifications in the south and southeast provinces including Kandahar, Uruzgan, Zabul, Helmand, Wardak, Khost, Paktia, Paktika and Ghazni.

Although the number of impacted communities is known in most areas of Afghanistan, the actual time it would take to clear the areas is not known and estimates are made from existing data. The south and southeast pose a particular problem as traditional methods of technical survey and clearance

will need to be adjusted to gather the required information and to implement activities.

Utilizing national implementing agencies whose personnel come from these regions and who have expertise in community-based activities will allow the MACA to gather this information more efficiently and to set tasks utilizing community members trained in survey and demining techniques.

Some CBMC tasks may not be an urgent demining priority, but MACA believes that working in the south and southeast is a priority for security and stability. Until the full situation is known, MACA can not make a judgement as to priorities.

Summary of Demining Activities

With regards to demining activities, the MACA will continue to coordinate implementation partners in the following activities:

1. Survey

- Collect information on the existence and impact of hazards at a community level; to gather precise technical and geographical data on contaminated land; to mark areas for the immediate protection of civilians.
- Provide technical survey throughout the country to determine the boundaries of SHA, reduce the areas, and recommend assets required for demining.
- Polygon survey activities throughout the country, reducing the areas of SHA by defining, mapping and marking minefields.

2. Information management:

- Record and analyse all new contamination discovered.
- Cooperation with the Central Statistics Office and the National Rural Vulnerability Assessment unit.

3. Priority setting:

- Apply the criteria used in establishing priorities to ensure the right tasks are done first and to enhance the transparency of the priority-setting process
- Refine the set of criteria based on findings from the post-demining impact assessment process (see below)

4. Demining:

- Encourage through policy that operators use a “tool box” approach of clearance methods, including manual demining, mine detection dogs, mechanical demining and explosive ordnance disposal (EOD)³³ and ensure that the VTF and other Bilateral donors funding entities in the country ensure a multi disciplined approach is taken.
- Based on a country-wide assessment of machine use in 2007, encourage donors to fund these assets.

5. Quality management (including monitoring & evaluation):

- Accredite demining operators which have high quality procedures and assets³⁴.
- Conduct QA/QC of humanitarian and commercial operators.
- Provide an ongoing monitoring mechanism through LIAT teams to ensure information on impacted communities is continuously updated; to validate original ALIS findings; to ensure new SHA are recorded; and to alert the Operations Centre of situations that require immediate response.
- Conduct post-demining impact assessments on cleared minefields and battle fields to determine how clearance has benefited people.
- Enhance the existing post impact assessment processes with the assistance of international and national specialists.

6. Meeting the needs of insecure areas:

- Encourage and facilitate a national CBMC programme, targeting, in particular, areas of instability and isolated communities. In the first

³³ Dedicated EOD teams will continue to provide specialist skills and assistance to clearance teams which encounter large ERW or caches of explosives. These assets will also target former battle areas to clear them quickly and efficiently.

³⁴ This will transition to DMC see Afghanistan 2009 Mine Action Portfolio projects

year, CBMC will focus on the south, southeast and east (Uruzgan, Zabul and provinces bordering Pakistan).

Mine Risk Education Sub-Strategy

The MACA objective for MRE is to reduce deaths and injuries by integrating MRE into government structures and community activities.

MRE Activities

Data collection and analysis using IMSMA is a vital part of the MRE programme, influencing communication strategies and resource allocations. For example, children (90% boys) between the ages of 7 and 14 now represent the most vulnerable group. However, with targeted messaging, the number of casualties within this group fell significantly from 404 children in 2002 to 172 in 2007. This 57% decline exceeded the average decrease in casualties (over 47%) across all age groups since 2002.

As well, through 2005-06, tampering was one of primary causes of accidents, and the MACA responded with campaigns specifically designed to discourage this behaviour. In 2007, data show a different picture. Playing or recreation accounts for 45% of casualties. All of the casualties are under the age of 26, with the majority between the ages of 7 and 14. With information like this, MACA is able work with ministries and implementing agencies to develop MRE strategies and awareness campaigns that specifically address high priority issues.

Communicating MRE messages is a challenge given low rates of literacy among rural Afghans, lack of full coverage by radio and television, and a low level of understanding among government officials of the importance of these issues. Coordination is paramount to ensure communications and services, and partnering with the government is essential for building national capacities and creating the structures and communication mechanisms necessary to maintain awareness to mine/ERW threats.

Government ministries and the Afghan Red Crescent Society (ARCS) are assuming increasing responsibility for MRE in Afghanistan (see below). Until this transition is more advanced, MACA will continue to contract partners to implement targeted MRE activities in high risk areas, ensuring MRE is provided throughout the country. For example, Handicap International will continue its community-based activities in Helmand and Kandahar. Handicap International's MRE programme has been working in these two provinces for over 15 years and continues this work despite the insecurity. Three other implementing agencies will have activities for returnees, mobile cinema MRE teams working in severely impacted area of the country, and a travelling circus.

Transition of MRE

The MACA is committed to a programme of transition and national ownership of MRE, and has been successful in increasing the participation of government agencies. In particular, the Ministry of Education (MoE) has emerged as a committed partner, and a MoU was signed between that Ministry and MACA in mid-2007. With modest assistance from MACA, the MoE has completed an MRE curriculum for grades 1-14. The Ministry's child protection unit has also trained 14,000 teachers in MRE (at MoE expense). MACA plans to continue modest levels of support to the MoE, covering assistance to the public education unit plus the educational radio and television department. It also invites child protection officers to participate in joint monitoring missions, and covers the travel allowances for this.

In addition, ARCS has become an increasingly important partner for MRE, and will provide the residual capacity to report and respond to new accidents, target emerging risks (e.g. displaced people settling in areas that may be contaminated), provide feedback to demining agencies, etc. Already, ARCS is the sole MRE service provider based in the North and Northeast, and will soon assume responsibility in the East and West. In future years, MACA will seek to support the further development of ARCS capacity for MRE by involving ARCS's extensive first aid volunteer network.

The MACA envisages that its support to the transition process will be needed over the medium term, and have engaged an MRE Transitions Officer to manage this.

Summary of MACA MRE Activities

With regards to MRE activities the MACA will:

1. Support MRE/VA activities through a variety of community based approaches, including:
 - Community education training that targets community members, schools and children.
 - Mobile cinema and mobile children's circus projects to tour the country where culturally appropriate.
2. Support emergency response targeted to communities with an acute mine and ERW risk.
3. Identify high-profile individuals in impacted communities to serve as focal points for delivering MRE, raising community awareness on clearance and survey activities (as well as issues surrounding mine and ERW survivors), and collecting information regarding mine and ERW incidents in the area.
4. Support radio programmes through the MoE Educational Radio and Television department for the regular broadcasts of MRE and disability related information.
5. In insecure areas, expand Community Based Mine Clearance activities to incorporate the MRE requirements of the communities and ensure training of demining personnel so they can fill such gaps.

Victim Assistance Sub-Strategy

The MACA objective for VA is to support capacity development and advocacy for landmine and ERW survivors and other persons with disability. States parties to the Ottawa Treaty assume specific obligations with respect to landmine victims. However, for reasons of sustainability and healthcare ethics, VA programmes must be integrated with broader programmes aimed at meeting the needs of all persons with disabilities according to the mandates of the Ottawa Treaty Nairobi Action Plan of 2005. In recent years therefore,

MACA has focussed its efforts on progress towards an Afghanistan National Disability Action Plan rather than support distinct VA projects.

Supporting Capacity Development & Transition in Victim Assistance

Disability and the prevention of disability remain complex issues in all countries. Communicating disability awareness messages is also a challenge given low literacy rates among rural Afghans, lack of full coverage by radio and television, and a low level of understanding among government officials of these issues. Additionally, there is limited access to emergency services and health centres in remote areas, along with minimal equipment, medicine, training for health and rehabilitation personnel, and funding. These constraints often prevent the disabled from receiving the care and rehabilitation services they need to survive and integrate into society.

In Afghanistan as elsewhere, a number of ministries have responsibilities for providing services to persons with disabilities..³⁵ The Ministry of Public Health (MoPH) is responsible for medical care and physical rehabilitation. The Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs, Martyrs and Disabled (MoLSAMD) is responsible for addressing social stigmatisation, including discrimination in access to employment. The Ministry of Education (MoE) is responsible for inclusive education³⁶ to meet the special needs of those suffering from a variety of disabilities.

Unfortunately, until recently, none of the ministries have taken the lead on the formulation of a coordinated programme designed to deliver the range of services needed by disabled persons. As well, no UN or donor agency has taken a leadership role in assisting the various ministries to work toward such a programme. Given this vacuum, and the special obligations of the Ottawa Treaty, the MACA has facilitated discussions on a national disability programme that would include landmine survivors. Milestones to date include:

³⁵ In addition, a number of NGOs and international organisations have long been active in victim assistance advocacy and disability programming more generally (ICRC, Swedish Committee for Afghanistan, ACBL, HI, Sandy Gall, etc.).

³⁶ MACA supports the production costs of a magazine on inclusive education published by the MoE, as well as a national technical advisor in the Ministry covering MRE and VA activities.

- Following the 2005 Meeting of States Parties in Zagreb, MACA hosted the 1st national victim assistance workshop in August 2006;
- Enlisting support from MoPH, MoLSAMD and, subsequently, MoE, MACA supporting the preparation of a draft National Plan of Action on Disability, which was presented at the 2006 Meeting of States Parties
- In November 2007, MACA supported a second workshop (the National Victim Assistance & Disability Workshop Review) attended by 140+ participants.

The Plan of Action is now updated based on recommendations arising in the 2nd workshop. The plan now known as the Afghanistan National Disability Action Plan has been approved by the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs, Martyrs and Disabled, translated into national languages and will be distributed in October 2008. MACA is supporting this work, as well as a new Disability Support Unit established within the MoLSAMD. Support has also been mobilised for Afghanistan to encourage the GoA to sign the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. The MACA envisages that its support will be needed over the next three years, and have engaged a VA Transitions Officer to manage the transition process.

Summary of MACA VA/Disability Activities

With regards to VA/Disability issues the MACA will:

1. Support VA/disability activities through a variety of community based approaches to raise awareness on issues surrounding mine and ERW survivors, as well as disability more generally. These include:
 - Community education training that targets community members, schools and children.
 - Mobile cinema and mobile children's circus projects to tour the country where culturally appropriate.
2. Support radio programmes through three different mechanisms:
 - Public radio forum broadcasts, providing discussions on disability issues by landmine survivors and other persons with disabilities.

3. Support the GoA in meeting its international treaty obligations vis-à-vis landmine survivors.
4. Support the continued capacity development efforts of MoPH, MoLSAMD, and MoE with respect to their disability programmes in line with the Afghanistan National Disability Action Plan, ANDS and Millennium Development Goals.
5. Engage other relevant ministries (Ministry of Communication; Ministry of Reconstruction and Rural Development) that have a role to play in disability programming and the rights of the disabled.

Sub-Strategy for Support to Capacity Development

As outlined within the United Nations Policy on Mine Action and Effective Co-ordination, the UN believes the primary responsibility for mine action lies with the mine-affected state. As such, the UN strives to support governments to assume responsibility for the oversight and strategic direction of mine action in their countries, and to support their efforts to build capacity to ensure this task is carried out effectively, efficiently, and safely. While progress towards national ownership has been fitful in Afghanistan, MACA has established relationships and agreements with key GoA units and is prepared to respond flexibly to opportunities that emerge.

Five concepts underpin the MACA strategy for capacity development:

1. It is Afghan organisations and individuals who must develop their capacities. Therefore, the MACA role is to support, not lead, their efforts.
2. Capacities must be developed to address future needs rather than to replicate what exists today in MACA. MACA and the many MAPA organisations are making significant progress to achieve the mine action targets specified in the ANDS and the Ottawa Treaty, and the contamination problem that will be inherited by the GoA will be far more manageable.
3. Significant mine action and policy-making capacities already exist within Afghanistan. In particular:

- the demining NGOs (both Afghan and international) pioneered humanitarian demining and, today, are among the largest and most capable in the world;
 - the MACA has been able to make substantial progress in nationalising its staff complement, including at the senior management level;
 - many of the government ministries involved in mine action have made substantial progress in assuming responsibility for the delivery of mine action services (e.g. MoE for MRE and inclusive education).³⁷
4. Flexibility is required to capitalise on emerging points of entry. Simply put, national ownership requires but commitment and capacity. Where commitment exists, the MACA can support capacity development.³⁸ However, the pool of trained and experienced public servants remains small, and progress in a specific ministry or unit can quickly halt with the transfer of a key individual.
5. Medium-term goals and strategies are required from the units that will assume responsibility for mine action. A flexible approach can win many battles, but still fail to achieve sustained progress in the absence of clear goals and realistic strategies for achieving these over the medium-term. MACA can facilitate the development of goals and strategies by outlining alternatives and ensuring Afghan policy-makers are aware of lessons learnt in other countries, it is essential that policy-makers and mine action officials put forward their strategies to which they are committed.

Department of Mine Clearance (DMC)

The DMC was created by presidential decree in 1989, but has never had the capacity to discharge its responsibilities. Now that it has been designated as (essentially) the future national mine action centre, MACA will endeavour to support GoA efforts to develop DMC capacity. On 11 May 2008, the DMC

³⁷ As well, Afghan civil society organisation – the ARCS in particular – have made significant progress in the delivery of MRE services.

³⁸ The MACA is creating a Transitions Unit to enhance its capacity of to respond to opportunities for progress.

moved offices from the ANDMA to the MACA, which will facilitate the capacity development process.

The MACA now manages a complex mix of centralized and regional processes. It analyzes the impact of mines, works with a variety of ministries, designs and budgets projects, and writes project proposals for donors to the VTF. MACA reports to both UNMAS and UNOPS, as well as the GoA. MACA is responsible to the households in impacted communities, the GoA, and donors for the quality of mine action activities.

DMC is not managing a system approaching the complexity of the MAPA. In the near term, the DMC can compliment MACA activities in areas such as quality management and links with government units at the provincial and district levels. Participation by the DMC in handovers of cleared minefields can also bolster perceptions that the GoA is arranging for the delivery of essential public services to the people of Afghanistan. But there is no requirement for the DMC to assume responsibility for all the roles played by MACA – its capacity development plans should be based on the needs that will remain in 2013.

The MACA presently sees its relationship with DMC as a partnership of separate entities. Many transition activities and issues will fall out from the very new partnership and relationship between the MACA and DMC. The MACA also sees the partnership between MACA and DMC emerging in the end as the capacity to deal with the unknown hazard for years to come.

As a result of the Mine Action Symposium, the draft mine action law of 2004 will not be pursued. The DMC is a government agency as decreed by former President Najibullah in 1989. This decree remains in effect and valid for the purposes of setting up a national mine action authority. Aspects of mine action legislation with regards to sale, traffic, possession and use of anti-personnel landmines are currently in place through the Ottawa Treaty and are supported by Afghan law regarding weapons and explosives.

Summary of DMC Support Activities

In support of capacity development the MACA and DMC will:

1. Support the activities of the newly established Inter-Ministerial Board for Mine Action under the chairmanship of the DMC.
2. MACA, in partnership with the DMC, will develop a plan to implement the actions required to ensure progressive Government responsibility for mine action during the next months. This plan will be developed through consultative processes with the Inter-Ministerial Board and shared with relevant stakeholders and will include among other issues quality management, staffing, and training.
3. Develop protocols and memorandum of understanding between the MACA and DMC to ensure roles, responsibilities and accountability for actions is defined.
4. Assess the resources of the MACA and DMC to determine in any overlaps of activities, staff and resources exist and to merge operational activities.
5. Identify gaps in knowledge among staff and provide informational briefings, trainings, and on the job coaching to address these gaps.
6. Ensure consultative and cooperative working relationships are established and MACA/DMC partnership in all coordination activities.
7. Identify future milestones and benchmarks to achieve transition by 2013.

Afghan Mine Action Authority

The formation of the Inter-Ministerial Body was legislatively an 'ad hoc' measure to ensure there was a consensus on the GoA focal point for mine action. As yet, no national Mine Action Authority has been established to assume responsibility for mine action policy and oversight of DMC.

Summary of Support to Development of a National Authority

In support of development of a national authority the MACA and DMC will:

1. Support the activities of the newly established Inter-Ministerial Board (IMB) and, eventually, an Afghan Mine Action Authority if and when it is formally established.

Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MoFA)

MoFA remains the lead agency for reporting on Ottawa Treaty obligations. (With support from MACA, the GoA remains current with all reporting obligations.)

Summary of Support to Meeting National Treaty Obligations

In support of Afghanistan meeting its international treaty reporting obligations, the MACA will:

1. In conjunction with DMC, support the MoFA in reporting on treaty obligations

Ministry of Defence (MOD)

MACA will continue to sit on the Ministry of Defence Ammunition Destruction Working Group. This group is chaired by the Ministry of Defence (MoD) and coordinated through Afghan New Beginnings Programme (ANBP) of the United Nations Development Programme's (UNDP) demobilization and disarmament programme. This group tracks any newly found stockpiles of munitions, weapons and mines. MoD reports through UNDP and information is shared among the

Year	Stockpiled Anti-Personnel Mines Destroyed
2003	2,489
2004	9,084
2005	19,729
2006	463,596
2007	13,327
Total	508,225

stakeholders. As of 2007, a total of 508,225 known stockpiled landmines have been destroyed.

Summary of Support to Ammunition Stockpile Destruction

In support of the destruction of ammunition and landmine stockpile destruction the MACA will:

1. Provide technical oversight of the handling and destruction of any newly found anti-personnel landmines and other munitions.

MRE & Victim Assistance

In order to transition MRE and VA activities to national ownership, the MACA has focused on building GoA capacity to establish and sustain structures that can formulate, coordinate, monitor and fundraise for MRE and VA programmes. MACA already works with key ministries (MoE, MoPH, MoLSAMD), and supports their efforts on advocacy for the rights of the disabled, awareness, and service delivery into their structures.

Additionally, the Afghan Red Crescent Society (ARCS), with assistance from the MACA and the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), is developing its capacity development (both field and management staff). Progress has been encouraging, allowing ICRC to formulate an exit strategy and MACA to cease support for traditional MRE services in the north and north-eastern provinces.

Ministry of Education (MoE)

MACA has supported a mine action office within the MoE. A MACA advisor to the MoE provides technical support for the development of curricula for both MRE and disability awareness, assists with national teacher training for MRE, supports the production of “Tabiat” a children’s magazine that includes MRE and Disability messages, and encourages inclusive education practices.

Summary of MACA Support to Transition of Responsibility for Mine Risk Education

In support of the transition of responsibility for MRE to the Government the MACA will:

1. Support curriculum development for the inclusion of MRE and disability awareness messages for:
 - Grades 1-6 (completed)
 - Grades 7-14 (completed)
 - Women’s literacy and adult education programmes.

2. Support regional MoE provincial directorates and child protection officers (among others) for information exchange, teacher training, and the distribution of materials
3. Support training of MoE staff, in particular child protection officers, in the reporting of new contamination, MRE for communities and disability awareness.
4. Support teacher training for MRE and disability awareness (over 14,000 out of the planned 18,000 teachers have already been trained)
5. Participate in the Inclusive Education Working Group
6. Ensure education issues for children with disabilities (an Ottawa Treaty obligation) are part of the Afghanistan National Disability Action Plan, and reflected in MoE policies
7. Support joint MACA/MoE monitoring and evaluation activities.

Ministry of Public Health (MoPH)

The MoPH has established a Disability Department with the support of the MACA to help ensure the integration of disability services and community-based rehabilitation referral networks throughout the basic health, hospital, and mental health services. The MACA supports two technical advisors to the Department. One covers coordination for the integration of disability services, plus technical support and training for MoPH staff and their implementing partners. The second advisor works to enhance and standardize orthopaedic and physiotherapy rehabilitation services under the oversight of MoPH.

Summary of MACA Support to Transition of Responsibility for Victim Assistance and Disability to MOPH

In support of the transition of responsibility for VA and disability the MACA will:

1. Support the continued leadership of the MoPH disability task force, comprising relevant technical stakeholders and service providers.
2. Support the training and capacity development for MoPH staff and their implementing partners.
3. Support the translation and production of technical materials for service providers and health practitioners.

4. Support the strengthening the community-based rehabilitation network.
5. Support the enhancement of MoPH coordination and oversight of orthopaedic and physiotherapy rehabilitation services through its implementing partners
6. Support the documentation and standardization of orthopaedic and physiotherapy services.

Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs, Martyrs, and Disabled (MoLSAMD)

The MoLSAMD is considered the focal point for disability advocacy and reporting progress under the Ottawa Treaty and the Afghanistan Compact benchmark for disability. MACA has supported the establishment of a Disability Support Unit (DSU) within the Ministry, which provides leadership within the disability sector and convenes people with disabilities, service providers, human rights colleagues, and government officials to develop policy, plans, and advocacy initiatives. The MoLSAMD led the sector in the 2nd National Victim Assistance/Disability Workshop held in October 2007, bringing together more than 210 people from across the country including disabled persons organizations, NGOs, Government directorates, UN and donors to review *Addressing the rights and needs of mine survivors and other persons with disabilities: The Islamic Republic of Afghanistan's objectives and plan of action for the period 2007-2009*. The revised report, now known as the *Afghanistan National Disability Action Plan*, is in use by government, UN, NGOs and civil society organizations for planning purposes and by the MoLSAMD to monitor progress against the ANDS benchmark objectives.

With the support of the MACA, the DSU will also provide a number of services for disabled persons throughout the country. The MACA provides technical advice and administrative support to assist the MoLSAMD build its capacity to disseminate information, provide outreach programmes for disabled persons in regional centres, create monitoring and reporting mechanisms for disability services, and build an advocacy and awareness capacity among Ministry colleagues at the central and provincial levels.

Summary of MACA Support to Transition of Responsibility for Victim Assistance and Disability to MoLSAMD

In support of the transition of responsibility for VA and disability the MACA will:

1. Support advocacy and awareness actions focused on the ratification of the Convention on the Rights and Dignity of Persons with Disability.
2. Support development of a standardized and non-discriminatory dictionary of disability terminology.
3. Support development of disability service referral guides for implementing partners, persons with disability and government actors.
4. Support a permanent Disability Support Unit building to house accessible conference space, a resource center and the offices of the Deputy Ministry for Disability Affairs.
5. Support the Disability Stakeholders Coordination Group.
6. Support the Inter-Ministerial Task Force on Disability.
7. Support regional outreach and access through the Disability Training and Resource Center programme in partnership with MOLSAMD in the regional centers for Kandahar, Kabul, Jalalabad and Mazar-i-Sharif.
8. Provide technical guidance and project staff to coordinate disability activities with implementing partners both central and regionally.
9. Recruit a reporting and monitoring officer to build the MOLSAMD systems and assist with monitoring of activities throughout the country.

MACA expects to build self-sufficient disability and MRE implementation mechanisms within both the MOE and the MOPH with two years. This does not mean the disability sector will be self sufficient as funding for service provision will need to continue for the next ten to twenty years. MACA also envisions that technical support within the MOLSAMD will likely be required for many years. With long-term support from donors, this will be possible and preferable in maintaining continuity and building institutional capacities in support of persons with disability.

Transition Unit:

The MACA has implemented a proactive transition programme within the MRE and VA components of mine action since 2002. Steps towards Government ownership and coordination of activities are being fostered through partnership and strengthened relations between three key Ministries. MACA has negotiated a two-year commitment with the MOE, the MOPH and the MOLSAMD to build institutional capacities within these organizations and increase ownership of MRE and VA and coordination of activities.

To build on these successes and further the capacity development of other relevant ministries MACA will establish a Transition Unit within the Directors offices to explore other ministry connections to future mine action in development initiatives, expand current ministry activities through the development of specific projects, as well as utilize the resources and expertise from other UN agencies to jointly implement government capacity development initiatives that enhance national ownership of mine action activities.

Summary of MACA Support to the Transition Unit Process

In support of the Transition Unit structures the MACA will:

1. Develop, plan and coordinate a variety of transition projects implemented in support of national ownership and capacity development within the Government of Afghanistan.
2. Provide technical guidance to ministry counterparts, supervision, monitoring and technical advice to project staff to ensure objectives are met and quality activities are implemented.

A variety of projects are currently being developed and initial steps have been taken to begin activities such as:

1. Transition of database management to appropriate national authority
2. Development of Information Ministry role in MRE and Disability advocacy
3. Joint WHO/MACA/MOPH project to enhance emergency care providers
4. Information dissemination and materials development through Kabul University

Afghan Red Crescent Society (ARCS)

ARCS is a significant partner of the MACA implementing the only single agency nationwide MRE community based project in Afghanistan. MACA has begun through capacity development of ARCS field and management staff to build not only MRE, but the financial and operational management capacities within the organization. These positive moves will enable Afghans to provide cost-effective monitoring of impacted communities, to victim data and to provide quality MRE.

Summary of Support to the ARCS

In support of the capacity development of ARCS the MACA will:

1. Continue to provide technical and financial assistance to the ARCS to ensure adequate capacity during the transition period.
2. Retain the services of the other MRE implementing agencies to ensure the provision of quality MRE is continued at required levels until the number of highly impacted communities is reduced and the ARCS capacity is built.

Internal Capacity Development

Capacity development takes leadership and a mutual understanding of the roles and responsibilities of all staff to ensure a shared vision of the way forward, delegations of authority and empowered decision making. The Programme Director will be the leader and provide the inspiration necessary to guide the organization forward in capacity development.

The MACA is filled with talented and capable staff. Capacity development is not just about individual skills and technical competencies, but also about confidence, ownership and attitude. These issues influence the efficiency, efficacy, and quality of programme activities while advancing ownership and commitment. Individual capacities need support not just through training, but through opportunities within the organization to learn by doing and having solid role models that provide non-technical attributes promoting self-confidence, critical thinking, strong work attitudes, and candid communication. The Programme Director, supported by a senior management team of both

international and national staff, will ensure organizational changes are put in place that enable new skills to be put to work effectively. Creating this enabling environment will ensure that staff are provided the support needed to encourage positive performance and to build strong leadership within the organization.

Summary of Support to Internal Capacity Development within MACA

In support of internal capacity development within organisation the MACA will:

1. Continue to identify posts ready for nationalization with appropriate capacity building in place and technical advisors as necessary over a limited period downsizing the international personnel as national staff take on full responsibility for their roles within the organization.
2. Support learning opportunities for staff and will provide technical guidance as appropriate to ensure staff capacity and commitment to excellence is fostered.
3. Open all posts to competitive processes to be filled by either international or national personnel. Ensure the increased national ownership of the programme throughout its entire management and oversight structure.

CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES

Gender

Afghanistan is a challenging work environment for all people as employment opportunities are low. Women are often not permitted to work outside of the house, especially in rural areas. In almost all rural settings, women do not and may not be permitted to leave their homes without a male escort, thus restricting opportunity to take on paid employment and seek education. In urban areas and among the more educated, however, increasing numbers of women are involved in humanitarian work, including mine action.

Despite the above, MACA has attracted a number of international and national female staff members and will continue to do so in the coming years. International females comprised 26% of all international staff members and

Afghan females comprised 4.9% of all national staff at the end of 2007, a marked improvement over levels just two years ago.

Table 2 – MACA female staff

Year	International Females	National Females
End-2005	23%	.04%
End-2007	26%	4.9%

Most positions held by women in mine action are of administrative and financial nature or as trainers within MRE and VA. The MACA recently appointed a woman as Deputy Programme Director. This is the first female in the history of mine action in Afghanistan to hold such a high-level management position.

A continuous re-evaluation of strategies within the MACA is a constant reality for the programme management to ensure high levels of productivity, access to communities and successful programme planning. Information gathering, prioritization and access to education are the key areas in which the MACA feels it may have an impact on gender in mine action. MACA will continue to evaluate its programme and work to raise awareness to the issues of gender, gender parity in information collection and equal MRE and VA educational opportunities within its own structure and those of implementing agencies and government counterparts.

MACA seeks to encourage attitude changes and to create gender-friendly national and social institutions. MACA will encourage Ministries to reach out to women and persons with disability and provide a variety of training opportunities and develop training guidelines and materials.

MACA staff will also participate in training activities. The MACA has established a gender focal point working group that will be consulted and will share relevant information with implementing agencies. Although technical gender expertise is limited at this time within the MACA, the MRE/VA department has a wealth of knowledge regarding advocacy, training and implementation with regards to vulnerable populations.

The MACA has a nationwide strategy to involve women in mine action despite difficulties caused by the culture. Advocacy activities have included both genders. School programmes encourage both girls and boys to draw postcards and send them to the diplomatic community to increase awareness to the situation in Afghanistan. Community-based MRE campaigns have resulted in signatures and fingerprints from thousands of Afghans, including women where accessible, to pass onto the Government. These activities, which have been implemented for over ten years, contributed to the Afghan Government's accession to the Ottawa Treaty.

Within the MRE and VA components of mine action, men, women, girls, and boys are considered in all aspects of programme planning, implementation and development. MRE and VA activities encourage the involvement of women to ensure their physical safety but more importantly to inform and protect their children, who are at most risk of becoming mine victims. MRE has been provided to more than 1.5 million Afghans nationwide in 2007 alone, almost 42 percent of whom were women.

Table 3 – MRE beneficiaries in 2007

Gender	Number
Female	644,761
Male	895,496
Total	1,540,257

Through the above actions, MACA aims to improve its ability to prioritize mine action activities and to access all target groups. Additionally, MACA aims to improve its staff awareness to gender issues and provide a gender-friendly work environment.

Summary of MACA Support to Integration of Gender Considerations

In support of integrating gender considerations in Afghanistan the MACA will:

1. Ensure that men, women, girls and boys have equal access to mine action activities and their benefits.

2. Aims to inform its staff on issues of gender in the hope of spurring a change in attitude and creating national and social institutions that encourage the participation of women.
3. 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, educators, health service providers and the Government with regards to outreach to women and girls with disability.
4. Ensure gender considerations within programme planning, data collection and educational opportunities in mine action.
5. Evaluate MRE and VA training activities through focus groups and discussions with training personnel and community members to improve teaching methodologies and include all genders and ages in these educational activities.
6. Implement a comparative analysis between the views of men and women with regards community clearance priority setting.
7. Implement a comparative analysis between the views of men and women with regards economic benefit of clearance (post demining impact assessment)

Environment

The destruction of mines and ERW will benefit the security environment and increase areas of land under use across the country. Disposal of mines and ERW is undertaken in accordance with international best practices with respect to environmental protection and safety, which is monitored through the MACA quality assurance programme. Additionally, AMAS includes a chapter on environmental management to ensure contractors within Afghanistan follow environmentally friendly and favourable practices in the field to help mitigate negative impacts on communities and their surrounding environment. This ensures the footfall of mine action is felt only in terms of safety and security.

Summary of MACA Support to Integrating Environment Considerations

In support of integrating environmental considerations the MACA will:

1. Require contractors to adhere to AMAS, which includes a chapter on environmental management, through its quality assurance department.
2. Regularly monitor to ensure contractors undertake disposal of mines and ERW in accordance with international best practices with respect to environmental protection and safety.

Conclusion

The MACA has many roles, but the primary function is to seek to influence all mine action partners in Afghanistan towards a common goal. To do this the MACA must encourage the highest standards in the field. If implementing partners fail to submit high quality information gradually the ability to plan with any confidence is lost. Donor understanding of what the MACA does is vital. On one hand it is the advisor to the UN VTF on policy and VTF project design but on the other hand it must do the same with bilateral donors if there is to be coherence of intent. The MACA does not implement – those elements the MACA has in the field are for quality assurance purposes. Nor does the MACA contract, the MACA advises on whom to contract and which projects are priorities for contracts. In short the MACA is an entity that seeks to propose policy and encourage stakeholders at all levels to focus on the defined goals of the Government of Afghanistan.

The UN control elements of the MACA will begin transition towards DMC in 2008 and as it is envisioned that over the course of the next 3 to 4 years the MACA structure will be radically altered and that of DMC will also change. A UN transition plan developed with DMC will be published in 2009.