



Quality Management in the Mine Action Programme for Afghanistan (MAPA)

Vera Bohle | Geneva | April 2011

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Acronyms

ADSP	Afghan Disability Support Programme	MDG	Millennium Development Goals
ALIS	Afghan Landmine Impact Survey	META	Monitoring, Evaluation and Training Agency
AMAC	Area Mine Action Centres	MFA	Ministry of Foreign Affairs
AMAS	Afghan Mine Action Standards	MoD	Ministry of Defence
ANBP	Afghan New Beginnings Programme	MoE	Ministry of Education
ANDMA	Afghan National Disaster Management Agency	MoI	Ministry of Interior
ANDMA	Afghan National Disaster Management Authority	MoLSAMD	Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs, Martyrs and Disabled
ANSA	Afghanistan National Standards Authority	MoPH	Ministry of Public Health
AP mine	Anti-personnel mine	MRE	Mine Risk Education
ARCS	Afghan Red Crescent Society	NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
BSC	Balanced Score Card	NMAA	National Mine Action Authority
CEN	European Committee for Standardization	NMAC	National Mine Action Centre
CWA	CEN Workshop Agreement	OECD	Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development
DAC	Development Assistance Committee of the OECD	OMAR	Organization for Mine Clearance and Afghan Rehabilitation
DAFA	Demining Agency for Afghanistan	PCA	Post Clearance Assessment
DMC	Department for Mine Clearance	PMT	Project Monitoring Tool
EOD	Explosive Ordnance Disposal	PPE	Personal Protective Equipment
ERW	Explosive Remnants of War	QA	Quality Assurance
GICHD	Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining	QC	Quality Control
GoIRA	Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan	QM	Quality Management
GPS	Global Positioning System	QMIT	Quality Management Inspection Teams
ICRC	International Committee of the Red Cross	SOP	Standard Operating Procedures
IM	Information Management	SWP	Standard Work Procedure
IMAS	International Mine Action Standards	T&E	Testing and Evaluation
IMSMA	International Management System for Mine Action	ToR	Terms of Reference
IP	Implementing Partner	UK	United Kingdom
ISO	International Standards Organization	UN SMAC	United Nations Standing Mine Action Capacity
KAP	Knowledge, Attitude, Perception	UNICEF	United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund
LIAT	Landmine Impact Assessment Teams	UNMAS	United Nations Mine Action Service
MA	Mine Action	UNMAT	United Nations Mine Action Team
MAC	Mine Action Centre	UNOPS	United Nations Office for Project Services
MACCS	Mine Action Coordination Centre for Afghanistan	UXO	Unexploded Ordnance
MAPA	Mine Action Programme for Afghanistan	VA	Victim Assistance
MDD	Mine Detecting Dogs	VTF	Voluntary Trust Fund

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In February 2011, the GICHD carried out an assessment of the quality management (QM) system of the Mine Action Programme for Afghanistan (MAPA) to:

1. assess how QM contributes to achieving standards, outputs, outcomes and performance improvements in the MAPA
2. investigate options for a QM system after transition to national ownership
3. allow other mine action programmes to learn from the experiences of the MAPA QM system.

Most mine action programmes worldwide are limited to a narrow understanding of quality assurance and quality control (QA/QC), focussing on demining only, and miss the opportunity to apply QM as a management principle to all key processes. As a matter of fact, often the key processes are not clearly defined in MA programmes: for example the 'product' or service of a mine action centre (MAC) is not really safe cleared land, but rather co-ordination of implementing partners (IPs), information management, local capacity building and, in some cases, conducting tenders or support of a UN mission. In addition, MA programmes mostly define the product or service only on an output (e.g. cleared land) and not an outcome level (what happened as a result of the clearance? What difference did we make to the lives of the beneficiaries?). The results-based approach implies QM is also required on a beneficiary level.

The MAPA QM system has developed over the past two decades. From the programmes that have been established more recently (not as a result of World War II), the system is today one of the best developed in the world. A lot of approaches have been developed and are being tested and continuously improved. The MAPA QM system covers a wide range of aspects, pillars, activities and guiding principles, including:

- humanitarian demining financed via grants from international donors, with the exception of clearance inside military bases.
- commercial demining (i.e. demining to enable private or public-private investments) and commercial contracts (i.e. a mining company paying a demining company for clearance),
- demining funded through the government budget or as a component of development projects (if it is reported to the MACCA)
- mine risk education (MRE), victim assistance (VA)
- land release, medical support to MA operations, accident investigation, community liaison, management of standards and strategies, data / information management, administration, coordination (including performance and monitoring of QM systems of the IPs), project design, competitive tendering, contracting, public relations
- outcome of the land released / the MRE or VA conducted
- impact of the land released / the MRE or VA conducted (have we made a change to the lives of the beneficiaries, their communities, to society, peace and security in the long-term?)
- safety, efficiency and effectiveness

The focal areas for QM are operations, priority setting and information management. The tools used for QM include:

- process mapping internal processes such as planning or data management
- accreditation of IPs
- monitoring: external QA/QC for demining teams, balanced scorecards (BSC) to assess IP performance, project monitoring tool (PMT) for projects progress
- Quality Circles
- internal audits
- evaluation
- KAP survey

The MAPA QM system is documented through the Afghan Mine Action Standards (AMAS) and Standard Work Procedures (SWPs). In addition, BSC, PMT, Quality Circle, survey, and audit reports are either stored on the MACCA server accessible to all who need to see them, or recorded by the QM section. The QA field reports are recorded in IMSMA.

There is however no documented overall quality policy, including principles, objectives and processes, and the QM documentation is not yet according to ISO 9001:2008 requirements. MACCA is planning to work on this.

Key steps in the QM development have been the understanding that MACCA changes its QM approach towards auditing the quality management systems of the IPs, because the responsibility for the quality of their products and services lays with them. The focus of QM will, from MACCA's side, move more and more away from demining team level to the IPs and their QM and planning systems level. Once a new understanding of the role of the MACCA in QM and of QM goals was achieved, new tools such as BSC, PMT and Quality Circles were introduced and tested with good success.

At the same time, MACCA has worked on QM in its own management processes. ISO and evaluation trainings have helped the MAPA to widen its scope of QM, following well-established practices from the production and development world. It turned out that formalizing and documenting processes alone, including process mapping and formulation of SWPs, helped to achieve better results. In contrast, non-formalized processes have often not achieved their aim.

Further work is also underway to focus more and more on evaluating the outcome and impact level of the programme; this should be achieved by making better use of evaluations, focussing on the change that an intervention is intended to bring and not only on activities. MACCA has started this process, which also includes understanding 'new' aspects such as land rights.

The transition of the MAPA authority to national ownership is under discussion. MACCA activities should therefore be directed towards creating a system that is sustainable after transition. A national QM system has to fit in and meet the needs of the Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan (GoIRA).

So far, the Government body responsible for mine action (Department for Mine Clearance / DMC) is involved in accreditation, boards of inquiry, AMAS management and internal audits, and three DMC staff attended the ISO course. However, DMC has only 11 staff and no official recognition by the GoIRA. Taking into account its limited capacity, it is clear that a system with frequent QA/QC visits to all sites cannot be maintained. At the same time, quality remains vital as the government will be liable after the handover of the demined areas.

In a future national system, new tasks may evolve for DMC such as procurement, and other GolRA agencies dealing with construction, public works, health, etc. will be involved in MA. The information management for MA will require clarification once the Afghan National Disaster Management Authority (ANDMA) takes over. Currently, the MACCA IM section has no clear national counterpart. Data reduction, including the differentiation between active and archived records, as well as the establishment of simple QM mechanisms will be important next steps.

More roles will need to be taken over by other Government bodies. This also includes the contact to the beneficiaries. The establishment of a hotline for ERW related issues to the police or ANDMA might be an option.

Dealing with evaluations (for example of post clearance assessments) and other qualitative or descriptive data remains a challenge because not even the UN has a defined process on this aspect yet. Building a knowledge management system would be required, ideally together with a national counterpart organisation.

The following recommendations reflect the conclusions from the assessment and possible next steps on quality management in the MAPA:

MACCA could

1. formulate a quality policy, including quality principles (e.g. support to sustainable development), resources and objectives. The quality objectives could be defined by core products/services and the corresponding core processes, based on results-aspects such as 'reduce/demining threat of ERW to the population' and not necessarily output-oriented aspects such as 'safe cleared land'. The quality policy has to make clear what merits monitoring, in order to reduce the QM system to the minimum.
2. consider identifying further core processes and map them. These processes could for example be general aspects such as planning or decision making, and they can be cross-sectional or even cross-organizational or beneficiary related. Mapped processes are good management tools, but also good support to transition, because activities and responsibilities are visualized and a discussion on what needs to be done to ensure the process will still be functioning after transition is facilitated.
3. ensure feed-back loops or at least closed loops in all processes to inform management, ensure action and support learning.
4. ensure all relevant data for efficiency and effectiveness is being collected and processed, including the pattern and depth of mines found, because this information is important for future risk assessments, allowing better decision making when to stop clearance or to use a more efficient tool.
5. develop a research agenda, decide what information is required, then decide how to get it, for example by trying to influence the ToR of external evaluations to benefit more from them. For this, MACCA has to be clear about which are the important questions that need to be answered in order to improve the programme and meet its overall goals, for example: what creates accidents? Are our priorities for clearance set the right way?

6. ensure there is a proper system in place to deal with qualitative / descriptive data such as case studies, lessons learned reports or recommendations from evaluations, including action plans and a thorough archive with meta information.
7. consider further options to reward good performance, for example a quality or innovation award.
8. continue work with the IPs on establishing a QM system based on auditing the IPs' QM systems rather than conducting QA/QC on demining team level.
9. consider aspects of liability for the released land in the transition context and support the GoIRA in finding solutions. One aspect of this might be the establishment of a complaint mechanism for citizens, such as a central telephone number.

DMC could

1. closely follow and be involved in all aspects of MACCA QM.
2. ensure that the QM system that is set-up will be sustainable in a national system.
3. look at QM systems in other long-term national ERW programmes such as France, Germany or UK to see if concepts could be applied in Afghanistan.
4. consider the advantages of an ISO 9001:2008 certification for DMC as part of the transition process.
5. discuss with ANDMA the option to set up a citizen emergency call and feedback hotline for ERW through ANDMA or the police.
6. contribute to setting up processes for qualitative/descriptive data, including their archiving with agreed meta-data (i.e. search words).
7. make sure sustainable solutions for liability for the released land will be established based on national law.

UNMAS could

1. ensure lessons are learned from one programme to the other by providing relevant documents and setting up processes supporting this learning. This includes the formulation of an overall quality policy, based – for example – on lessons learned in Afghanistan.

GICHD could

1. continue to support the Afghan transition process by providing expertise on specific issues such as QM, at the invitation of GoIRA or MACCA. This includes providing information and ideas on QM systems or prioritizing and documenting QM processes, etc.
2. support the exchange of information on QM-related issues between MA programmes, for example by sharing this report and by organizing a workshop to exchange information and gather knowledge on QM systems.

1. INTRODUCTION

Rationale, Purpose and Objectives of the Assessment

The GICHD carried out an assessment of the quality management (QM) system of the Mine Action Programme for Afghanistan (MAPA) in the context of the German-funded project *Development of quality management, monitoring and evaluation systems in mine action programmes of highly affected countries*. The goals of the project are to contribute to:

1. efficient, effective and sustainable work of national mine action authorities
2. smooth transition to national ownership from UN Mine Action agencies
3. ensuring that defined target results (outputs; outcomes; impacts) are being achieved in a mine action programme.

The specific objectives of the study in Afghanistan were to:

4. assess how QM contributes to achieving standards, outputs, outcomes and performance improvements in the MAPA
5. investigate options for a QM system after transition to national ownership
6. allow other mine action programmes to learn from the experiences of the MAPA QM system.

The report: (i) documents achievements, experiences and lessons arising from MAPA QM, (ii) provides findings concerning the specific objectives, and (iii) provides recommendations regarding possible future strategies and approaches. The primary audiences are the MAPA decision makers and managers of mine action programmes in other countries, as well as central guidance bodies such as the UN Standing Mine Action Capacity (SMAC).

Methodology

The study featured (i) QM general background information, (ii) review of documents and data, (iii) a field mission to Afghanistan. The following activities were conducted during the field mission:

- Meetings with the MACCA and DMC QM team¹
- Discussions with implementing partners
- Review of MACCA QM standards, strategy and other QM documents
- Review of background documents such as national and regional mine action and development strategies²

The study was conducted by Vera Bohle, GICHD Senior Expert. The field mission took place 5-11 February 2011. To assess the MAPA QM system in a systematic way, the author developed a list of questions for the interviews.³

The author would like to thank all persons who have contributed with their knowledge to this assessment. Particular thanks to Alan McDonald, Abigail Hartley, Dr. Aimal Safi, Mohammad Shafiq Yosufi, Mohammad Sediq Rashid, Mohammad Wakil, Hansie Heymans, Shamsullah Yousufzai and the colleagues from the Area Mine Action Centres for their support.

¹ Please see the full list of persons met in annex 5

² Please see the full list of documents consulted in annex 4

³ Please see the full list of questions in annex 1

2. CONTEXT

Quality Management in Mine Action

The general understanding of quality management in the mine action sector follows the IMAS definition of quality assurance and quality control:⁴

“Quality assurance: part of quality management focused on providing confidence that quality requirements will be fulfilled.

Note: The purpose of QA in humanitarian demining is to confirm that management practices and operational procedures for demining are appropriate, are being applied, and will achieve the stated requirement in a safe, effective and efficient manner. Internal QA will be conducted by demining organizations themselves, but external inspections by an external monitoring body should also be conducted.”

“Quality control: part of quality management focused on fulfilling quality requirements.

Note: QC relates to the inspection of a finished product. In the case of humanitarian demining, the ‘product’ is safe cleared land.”

However, the definitions of quality and quality management are wider both in ISO and IMAS:

“Quality: degree to which a set of inherent characteristics fulfils requirements. “

“Quality management: coordinated activities to direct and control an organization with regard to quality.”

Quality management is not limited to achieving safe cleared land, but it is a management principle covering all kinds of tasks.

While the formulation and management of IMAS themselves can be seen as a mine action QM component, there is no specific IMAS on QM, but a number of chapters mention it or deal with it:

Accreditation:

- > Accreditation of demining organizations (IMAS 0730)
- > Accreditation of MRE organizations (IMAS 07.31) moved to 12.10 now.
- > Testing of MDD and handlers (IMAS 09.42)
- > Accreditation Technical Note 07.30 (an example)
- > T&E of metal detectors (CWA 14747:2003)
- > T&E of soil characterization and GPR (CWA 14747-2:2008)
- > T&E of machines (CWA 15044:2009)
- > EOD Competency (CWA 15464:2005)

Quality Assurance:

- > Monitoring of demining organizations (IMAS 07.40)
- > Monitoring of MRE (IMAS 07.41)
- > Monitoring of stockpile destruction (IMAS 07.42)
- > QM for mechanical demining (CWA 15833:2008)

Quality Control:

- > Inspection of cleared land (IMAS 09.20)
- > IMAS Sampling tool (IMAS 09.20)
- > Follow on after use of demining machines (CWA 15832:2008)

⁴ See annex 1 for a list of quality related definitions extracted from ISO 9000:2005

IMAS also defines the responsibilities of a QA/QC officer. In many programmes QM staff is responsible for:

- > Accreditation
- > QA
- > External QC
- > Standards

Most mine action programmes worldwide are limited to the narrow understanding of QA/QC and miss the opportunity to apply QM as a management principle to all key processes. As a matter of fact, often the key processes are not clearly defined in MA programmes: for example the ‘product’ or service of a mine action centre (MAC) is not really safe cleared land, but rather co-ordination of implementing partners, information management, local capacity building and, in some cases, conducting tenders or support of a UN mission. In addition, MA programmes mostly define the product or service only on an output (e.g. cleared land) and not an outcome level (what happened as a result of the clearance? What difference did we make to the lives of the beneficiaries?). The results-based approach implies QM is also required on a beneficiary level. The principle of beneficiary or client satisfaction is not only applied in the development sector; it is also the basis of the ISO series on QM.

Textbox 1– QM in mature explosive ordnance disposal (EOD): Germany, France & the U.K.

QM systems in long-term national (EOD) programmes such as in Germany, France and the United Kingdom (UK) have different ways of functioning. Germany has a fully civilian EOD service, with tenders between commercial companies for area clearance and a public EOD service dealing with ammunition transport, destruction and bomb disposal. Different QM areas and actors can be identified:

- > Each company working in EOD requires a number of permissions certifying its ability to handle EOD.
- > QA/QC of cleared areas is conducted by the EOD services of the Lander, which are normally a section under the Lander Ministry of Interior (Moi) or Construction. In two exceptions, a specialized company fulfils the role of the public EOD section.
- > Health & safety control bodies of the local authorities look after the protection of the general public.
- > Professional trade associations ensure the protection of employees, and the maintenance of industrial health & safety standards.
- > Implementer / steer building (tendering on behalf of Federal Government and Lander) are looking at standards set by construction.
- > Overall financial control lays with the financial audit authorities.

France has a mixed civilian and military EOD response system. When clearing military installations, the military does in-house QM. If contracts are tendered out by the Ministry of Defence (MoD) or the Moi (for construction projects), QM works as follows:

- > Companies have to provide evidence of their technical know-how.
- > Once the tender is won, the QM is essentially managed internally by the companies.
- > An external expert, a *chargé de sécurité pyrotechnique*, inspects the site once a week, verifying procedures and security.
- > When the site is cleared, the company produces an *Attestation de non-pollution pyrotechnique*. After that, the MoD is responsible for the decontamination for a period of 13 years after clearing. If need be (i.e. discovery of EO), it has the obligation to re-survey, and eventually re-clear.

The purely military U.K. EOD system applies a different, personnel-oriented approach: the military personnel conducting the EOD operations have to undergo regular trainings and annual tests to ensure their capability of fulfilling their tasks properly.

Afghanistan

Afghanistan is a mountainous and ethnically diverse country. Efforts by successive national governments to exert effective authority over the country's isolated and diverse regions have remained a recurrent theme in Afghanistan's political economy to this day. Starting with the Soviet incursion in 1979, Afghanistan became a central theatre in the Cold War. The conflict has taken its toll in the form of repeated and massive migrations of people plus the growth of war economies (particularly, opium), which provide revenues and regional-ethnic powerbases for insurgents and numerous warlords (or, more politely, "commanders").

Since the Taliban were dislodged, the international community has maintained a large NATO-led stabilization force and contributed substantial sums in humanitarian and development assistance. The Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan (GoIRA) remains weak and the country is heavily dependent on the international community, including for mine action. Although in 2008 an ad hoc Inter-Ministerial Body designated the Department for Mine Clearance (DMC) to be the government 'focal point' for mine action, the UN Mine Action Coordination Centre for Afghanistan (MACCA) remains the *de facto* national authority and mine action centre for the Mine Action Programme for Afghanistan (MAPA). MAPA is perhaps the largest mine action programme in the world, comprising over 20 international and national NGOs and firms.

Further information on Afghanistan and the Afghan Mine Action Programme (MAPA) are provided in Annex 6.

3. The MAPA QM System

Introduction

A quality management system and related terms are defined in ISO 9000:2005 as follows:

"Quality management system: management system to direct and control an organization with regard to quality."

"System: set of interrelated or interacting elements."

"Management system: to establish policy and objectives and to achieve those objectives."

The ISO series mainly refers to organizations, and many of the concepts can be applied. In MA however, it needs to be taken into account that we deal not only with the internal QM systems of organizations, managed in a straight-forward leadership (or, command-and-control) logic,⁵ but we have to address QM in multi-stakeholder programmes, which means using a steering (or coordination) logic.

The MAPA QM system has developed over the past two decades.⁶ A change of understanding from 'the Monitoring, Evaluation and Training Agency (META – now defunct), is responsible for quality' to 'implementing partners (IPs) are responsible for the quality of their products' has been achieved. The process of MACCA moving towards a quality auditing rather than a quality management function in relation to the IPs is ongoing. Further, QM principles are being applied additional functions and products other than safe cleared land; it has become a management principle based on the ISO 9000 series and on results-based monitoring and evaluation practices. From the programmes that have been established more recently (not as a result of World War II), the MAPA QM system is today one of the best developed in the world. This has been achieved through a

⁵ The terms 'leadership logic' and 'steering logic' origin from Capacity Works, the tool for quality management used by Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (German International Cooperation)

⁶ The main milestones of MAPA QM are listed in annex 2.



continuous learning and improvement process, enabled by sufficient attention and resources, and through engaged individuals who have promoted the adoption of QM concepts from outside MA.

At this stage, the MAPA QM system has no force under national law and is only applied inside the MACCA area of responsibility. The MACCA is a UN project, so IMAS applies. However, the legal situation after the transition to national ownership remains unclear. To date, there is no government decision that clearly specifies DMC's role and responsibilities.

Standards and Strategies

The MAPA is guided by the Afghan Mine Action Standards (AMAS), which are based on the International Mine Action Standards (IMAS). The AMAS are managed by a review board consisting of different MACCA sections and representatives of the IPs.

As mentioned above, the AMAS do not have a legal status in the Afghan Government system to date, but work to achieve this is continuing. There are other national laws affecting the MAPA such as the NGO law and the labour law.

To encourage the adherence to AMAS and the achievement of strategic goals, MACCA has developed Standard Work Procedure (SWP) documents, laying out the processes within MACCA and MAPA.

AMAS and SWPs particularly for the aspect of quality management include:

- AMAS 02: Quality Management
- SWP 07: Accident and incident investigation
- SWP 10: Quality circle process
- SWP 15: AMAS management
- SWP 18: Internal audit
- SWP 31: Balanced score card tool
- SWP 30: Project Monitoring Tool
- SWP 32: Proposal Review Process

The MAPA follows the Mine Action Strategic Guideline 2008-2013. It includes deliverables on survey, marking, clearance and MRE from the annual operational plan, as well as capacity building and transition of authority to DMC and other national agencies.

The Afghan Mine Action Strategy has focused on achieving the Afghan Compact⁷ and AP Mine Ban Convention (Ottawa Convention) benchmarks:

“By end-2010, in line with Afghanistan's Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and Afghanistan's Ottawa Convention obligations, 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; and by end-2010, all unsafe, unserviceable and surplus ammunition will be destroyed.”⁸

The Ottawa Convention requires – among other – that Afghanistan must make a formal request for an extension unless all anti-personnel landmines in Afghanistan are cleared by 2013.

Today, the MAPA is focussing on the National Priority Programmes. These programmes lay out the priorities of the GoIRA in areas such as governance, development, peace and security.

⁷ Building on Success : the London Conference on Afghanistan, London 31 January – 1 February 2006

⁸ Afghan Compact, page 6

MAPA does not yet have an overall quality policy and clearly defined objectives for quality management. A document on this is planned, and has been addressed in quality circle meetings.

Responsibilities and Resources

ISO 9001 identifies the following QM resources: human resources, competence /training / awareness, infrastructure / work environment, and financial resources.

The MACCA's core QM section in Kabul consists of three people, but specific QM tasks involve more MACCA personnel; for example, the work on the AMAS review board. The Planning, Programmes and Operations departments of the MACCA are also dealing with QM. In the field, there are 45 operations assistants based in the Area Mine Action Centres (AMACs) conducting QA and QC. Offices and equipment are available for all staff and current tasks, including vehicles, GPS, cameras, compass, computer, PPE, etc.

The responsibilities for core QM processes within the MACCA are clearly defined and include planning, programme and proposal review, project and IP selection, information management, test and evaluation of Mine Detecting Dogs (MDD) and machines, and for EOD.

DMC is 'accompanying' MACCA on QM work but has not yet taken responsibility for it. There are currently no other government entities (outside MA) dealing with quality aspects such as environmental protection or construction issues, worksite safety etc. There is however a national standards organization called Afghanistan National Standards Authority (ANSA). MACCA has established a link with ANSA; once the national mine action standards are revised, these will be submitted to ANSA for approval. Some ministries are, directly or indirectly, involved in MA (or will be in future): for example the Ministry of Mines dealing with copper mines where demining is required, the Ministry of Finance with its tendering office (*Tadarukat*) and the Ministry of Energy and Water.

The IPs have their internal QM systems and the relevant functions, including personnel from the NGOs international and national headquarters, as well as field staff. The NGOs cover QM in the context of safe cleared land, but not always with regard to other aspects such as priority setting or capacity building.

Training

After META collapsed, MACCA put an emphasis on ISO training. The Chief of Operations completed an ISO 9000 course in the UK in 2005, and initial steps were taken towards conformity: a common QM terminology was adapted, and MACCA tried to follow the eight ISO principles, including customer focus.⁹ MACCA has mapped some processes including planning, priority setting and accreditation.

However, it became clear that a critical mass of the MAPA and MACCA management staff would require ISO 9000 training to implement change. Between 2008 and 2010, about 30 people received training in a Lead Auditor course, provided by IQ Global Solutions India in Chennai.¹⁰ This included staff from different sections of MACCA, e.g. operations, planning, information management, plus IPs.

⁹ Beside customer focus, the other principles are: leadership, involvement of people, process approach, system approach to management, continual improvement and factual approach to decision making

¹⁰ The cost of the Lead Auditor course is very low in international comparison: about US\$ 400 per person. The same course costs over £1,000 in the U.K.

In addition to the ISO 9000 training, MACCA followed the path of results-based monitoring and evaluation. The GICHD, in cooperation with IPDET,¹¹ provided Evaluating Mine Action training workshops particularly for the MAPA in 2010 and 2011. A total of about 60 persons have been trained to date, and another workshop is scheduled for November 2011.

At the field level, all operations assistants are cross-trained in mine clearance, BAC and EOD, including techniques for non-technical and technical survey.

Adequacy of Resources

The resources are sufficient for the current QM processes in the MAPA. However, to improve processes (for example, to cover post-demining audits) more resources will be necessary. In addition, the QM resources (including the clarity on responsibilities) in the Afghan government are not yet adequate – this is a challenge for transition.

A specific challenge for QM in the field is security and access. The operations assistants are not able to enter certain areas with the current equipment and level of protection. In addition, many commercial “checking” procedures are undertaken quickly and are completed before being reported to MACCA, so it is not in a position to undertake QM activities.

Coverage

There are different dimensions to consider concerning coverage of a QM system:

1. by funding mechanism
2. by stakeholder
3. by MA pillar
4. by activity or result
5. through overall criteria or guiding principles, and
6. by looking at processes within and between organizations, and between organizations and other stakeholders such as beneficiaries or donors.

Generally, coverage depends on the area of influence and the ability of management to identify key stakeholders, tasks and processes. One approach to coverage does not exclude another; they are interlinked and often complement each other.

Coverage by funding mechanism

QM in Afghanistan covers humanitarian demining financed via grants from international donors, with the exception of clearance inside military bases.

Regarding commercial demining (i.e. demining to enable private or public-private investments) and commercial contracts (i.e. a mining company paying a demining company for clearance), the accreditation process is the same but additional QA/QC depends on the contract. According to MACCA, commercial contracts can be difficult to monitor because they are not often reported to the UN. Such monitoring can be difficult because commercial companies often operate in insecure areas under military protection, and the QM inspectors do not have the same degree of protection. As well, commercial demining follows the priorities of the client and checks by demining firms are often done in areas that have no suspicion of mines/ERW. For MACCA, it is still important to assure the quality of areas cleared by commercial operations and it conducts QA on commercial checking processes so far as possible given security and the speed of the operations.

¹¹ International Training for Development Evaluation Training, www.ipdet.org

Demining funded through the government budget or as a component of development projects are covered if it is reported to the MACCA. Currently, the only project funded by the government is the Aynak copper mine, and MACCA is doing QA on that project.

QM is not provided by MACCA for military missions by international stabilisation military forces or for military-to-military assistance.

Coverage by stakeholder

In brief, MA stakeholders in Afghanistan include the Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan (DMC/ANDMA and different ministries), the UN (UNMAS/MACCA, UNOPS, UNICEF), operators (NGOs, commercial companies), and the military, plus donors and beneficiaries and their local representatives such as the shuras.

If MACCA wishes to follow a QM approach ensuring all relevant stakeholders are covered, it would be worthwhile to conduct a stakeholder-mapping exercise to understand the role and involvement of all partners.

Coverage by MA pillar

Demining is the main focus of QM in Afghanistan. It is covered with the exceptions mentioned in the paragraph above.

Risk education is covered if the project is implemented by one of the IPs, and MACCA conducts spot checking of MRE conducted by the Ministry of Education in schools, or by other government bodies. In theory for the last case, the QM system of the relevant national authority, or the overall national standards bodies such as professional associations, could be responsible. Due to time constraints during this assessment, it was not possible to investigate the government MRE QM system outside the MAPA in greater detail.

Victim assistance is generally covered if a project is implemented through the IPs, mainly through occasional QC on the plans. As victim assistance is a long-term government health and social welfare responsibility, it a plan was developed for a UNOPS Afghanistan project, in partnership with various Government ministries, with a strong focus on capacity building for advocacy and on physiotherapy. However, this plan had to be abandoned and now the Afghan Disability Support Programme (ADSP), funded by VTF for Mine Action, is still located in the MACCA and will be there for as long as it takes to find another “home” for it. The AMAS provide guidance how to conducting QA/QC on the ground. Projects such as the prosthetics centres of ICRC and others have never been covered.

Stockpile destruction was part of the Afghan New Beginning Programme and, consequently, was not directly under the control and responsibility of the MACCA. MACCA does however accredit organizations planning to conduct weapons and ammunition destruction (including the review of the SOP) and does QA visits at demolition teams of the IPs.

There is no QM for advocacy projects.

Coverage by activity or result

There is a long list of activities in MA programmes, including for example:

- Land release: non-technical survey, technical survey, manual clearance, mechanical ground preparation
- Medical support to MA operations
- Accident investigation
- Community Liaison

- Management of standards and strategies
- Data / information management
- UNMAT/NMAA/MAC administration
- Coordination, including performance and monitoring of QM systems of MA implementers
- Project design
- Competitive tendering
- Contracting
- Public Relations

The results refer to:

- Outcome of the land released / the MRE or VA conducted (have we made a change to the lives of the beneficiaries and their communities in the medium-term?)
- Impact of the land released / the MRE or VA conducted (have we made a change to the lives of the beneficiaries, their communities, to society, peace and security in the long-term?)

MAPA QM addresses to a certain degree all of the above, but each of the points listed requires its own approach to QM and could be investigated in greater detail, guided by questions such as “do we really learn as much as possible and necessary?”, “do we ensure the best quality service through the QM we apply?” or “do we provide the best value for money, i.e. do we focus on where the real risks are and where QM services can be provided at little or no cost?” With regard to transition, the question would be: “will this system be sustainable after transition and, if not, which changes are required?”

The most relevant activities are further dealt with in chapters below, including aspects of strategic management, operations and information management.

Coverage through overall criteria or guiding principles

Overall criteria or guiding principles include for example safety,¹² efficiency¹³ and effectiveness.¹⁴ The OECD DAC has compiled a list providing further guidance on what criteria might be relevant.¹⁵ Traditionally, safety has been the guiding principle for all QA and QC in MA. However, criteria such as efficiency and effectiveness also merit sufficient attention for a good and cost-worthy service.

The MACCA covers safety through monitoring the QM systems of the IPs, through regular QA monitoring visits, and through QC checks as appropriate prior to handover of land being released.

Efficiency is addressed through tools like the Balanced Score Card (BSC) and the Project Monitoring Tool (PMT) and through collection of relevant data, including mines and fragments found, personnel deployed, equipment used, terrain, soil, etc. The information management section contributes, for example, by using IMSMA to flag SHAs that are about 40,000 m² in size where completion takes longer than four months, thus alerting operations to take action.

¹² Safety in demining includes both safety for the deminer while working and an area free of explosives as a result.

¹³ OECD/DAC definition of efficiency: A measure of how economically resources/inputs (funds, expertise, time, etc.) are converted to results.

¹⁴ OECD/DAC definition of effectiveness: The extent to which the development intervention’s objectives were achieved, or are expected to be achieved, taking into account their relative importance.

¹⁵ See the *DAC Principles for the Evaluation of Development Assistance*, OECD (1991), Glossary of Terms Used in Evaluation, in 'Methods and Procedures in Aid Evaluation', OECD (1986), and the *Glossary of Evaluation and Results Based Management (RBM) Terms*, OECD (2000)



Regarding effectiveness, a number of measures have been taken: post-demining impact assessments,¹⁶ post-demining audits by DMC, and a landmines and livelihood survey managed by the GICHD.¹⁷ However, other aspects have not been covered (for example, the question in how far the application of mechanical equipment might create soil or other environmental damage).

Coverage by looking at processes within and between organizations

The process-orientation is what ISO proposes. Processes can be identified on all levels, ranging, for example, from how MACCA interacts with the national authorities to ensuring a deminer double-checks the functioning of his metal detector when leaving the minefield. The processes can include everything done by a single person to actions by a multiplicity of stakeholders.

MACCA has identified and mapped a number of processes (for example, on planning or data management). The lay-out of these processes includes QM elements, but often the feed-back loop is not fully closed. Closing the feed-back loop for the key processes is essential to allow the person responsible for the process to learn and act according to what has been learned.

The process-orientation of QM does require some work and re-thinking, but it might be the most promising approach in order to ensure all relevant activities and results are covered in a cross-cutting manner, including stakeholders, funding mechanisms etc. It might also be the way ahead for transition, because once the key processes have been identified and mapped, the responsibilities can be easier allocated and capacity gaps can be identified.

Tools

A number of different tools are applied for QM in the MAPA both between and within organizations, including:

Accreditation

There are two different types of accreditation in the MAPA: the accreditation of the organization to work in Afghanistan and the accreditation to conduct specific operations such as clearance or MRE. The accreditation processes are described in detail in the AMAS. The most important element of the operational accreditation is the assurance that an IP's Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) conforms to the AMAS.

Monitoring¹⁸

Monitoring is the routine, ongoing internal activity of tracking key indicators. It is used to collect information on a programme's activities, outputs, and outcomes to measure the performance of the program.

The MACCA uses monitoring in a number of ways, as described below.

External QA/QC

External QA/QC means field visits by the AMAC operations assistants. The QA form allows the recording of conformities and non-conformities of the IP teams. The reference document is the accredited SOP. For QC, a percentage of the cleared ground is re-checked. MACCA is working on

¹⁶ These surveys themselves have, however, not been subject to QA by MACCA.

¹⁷ Reference

¹⁸ The Development Assistance Committee of the OECD defines monitoring as a continuing function that uses systematic collection of data on specified indicators to provide management and the main stakeholders of an ongoing intervention with indications of the extent of progress and achievement of objectives and progress in the use of allocated funds.

changing external QA/QC to quality monitoring on the organizational rather than the team level. This means MACCA will focus on monitoring the proper functioning of each IP QM system.

Balanced Scorecard

MACCA has introduced the balanced scorecard (BSC) to assess IP performance. The process is described in detail in SWP 31. The BSC assessments are carried out on a quarterly basis. The performance of the IPs is assessed in terms of output, quality of service, number of demining accidents, and reporting. In other words, BSC measures the productivity and quality of work on an IP level.

Project Monitoring Tool

As the name suggests, the Project Monitoring Tool (PMT) is a tool that is used by MACCA for monitoring of the projects. Project monitoring is a continual activity carried out by MACCA throughout the project implementation phase. Project monitoring measures project progress against the IPs' most recently submitted and approved operational plan.

Contract monitoring

MACCA does not issue contracts so the IPs do not have any contractual obligations to MACCA. Nevertheless, MACCA monitors both projects and contracts on behalf of donors against their plans on quarterly basis, using the Project Monitoring Tool. MACCA provides the information to the UNOPS contracting office and to bilateral donors (only if the project is demonstrating problems).

MACCA also applies the BSC criteria to UNOPS projects at the end of each project/contract and gives to MACOA as an overview of the entire project, accidents associated it, quality, achievement against plan, reporting, etc. This differs from the BSC in that the "normal" BSC is done quarterly looking at each IP and all its operations across the country, whether bilaterally or VTF funded, rather than specific projects.

MACOA monitors IP contracts through appraisal and checking IP reports – narrative/technical (IMSMA) – and verification by MACCA's operations and IMSMA departments.

Quality Circles

Quality Circles are defined as small groups of people from the same or similar work units who meet on a voluntary basis to identify and analyze problems and recommend solutions to management. The Quality Circle processes and procedures are described in SWP 10. Quality Circle participants develop ToRs for each meeting. The meetings address broad questions such as 'How can the QM systems of the IPs be improved?' or 'How can we make manual follow-up after machines more efficient?' After the meetings, minutes are distributed but there is often no systematic follow-up on recommendations or decisions coming from the meetings. In 2010, there were five Quality Circle meetings.

Internal Audit

Inspired by the ISO 9000 courses, MACCA has conducted internal audits. In this process, someone from one MACCA section audits another section; for example someone from Planning looks at MRE or someone from MRE looks at IMSMA, etc. The purpose of an internal audit is to improve management processes and cross-sectional cooperation. MACCA staff found this exercise very useful and they are planning another round this year.

Evaluation¹⁹

Evaluations are periodic and time bound. They can be internal, external, or participatory, and they should provide periodic feedback to the key stakeholders.

Over the years, MAPA had many external evaluations, mostly commissioned by donors. These evaluations were normally not coordinated, and they often only looked at a segment of the programme, for example at MACCA or at one project of an IP. These types of evaluations meet donor requirements for accountability, but they rarely serve for overall performance improvement of the programme.

The internal use of evaluation as a QM tool is still a gap, and MACCA intends to address this gap. Two examples mentioned requiring a review were community based demining projects and the MRE methodology.

KAP Survey

MACCA has conducted a total of three knowledge, attitude, perception (KAP) surveys. The most recent (2010) addressed the question: 'How is MA viewed in Afghanistan?' Surveyors interviewed 1600 randomly selected people. The purpose of this type of survey is to find out if people had complaints, as well as a tool for accountability.

Documentation

The MAPA QM system is documented through AMAS and SWPs. In addition, BSC, PMT, Quality Circle, survey, and audit reports are either stored on the MACCA server accessible to all who need to see them, or recorded by the QM section. The QA field reports are recorded in IMSMA since November 2010. Before this date, they were in a separate database.

The IPs do not report their QM to MACCA, unless MACCA asks them to send some specific reports. This includes their internal Quality Circle reports on accidents or any other issue such as incident investigation reports or their QA record for specific teams. It is envisaged to further develop the QM reporting from the IPs to MACCA, for example through the accreditation review audit and further focus on monitoring internal QM systems of the IPs.

There is however no documented overall quality policy, including principles, objectives and processes, and the QM documentation is not yet according to ISO 9001:2008 requirements.²⁰ MACCA is planning to work on this.

ISO 9000 differentiates between documents and records in a QM system. A document is information and its supporting medium, while a record is a document stating results achieved or providing evidence of activities performed. Documents include procedure documents (i.e. checklists, forms, working instructions etc), drawings, reports, or standards. Records can be used, for example, to allow tracing and to provide evidence of verification, preventive action and corrective action; for example an audit report.

Regarding QM documentation, ISO 9001 requires six documented processes:

- Control of documents (4.2.3)

¹⁹ The Development Assistance Committee of the OECD defines evaluation as:

- the process of determining the worth or significance of an activity, policy, or program
- an assessment, as systematic and objective as possible, of a planned, on-going, or completed intervention.

²⁰ MACCA is considering an ISO 9001:2008 certification for its operations section, because it will support the transition to national ownership.

- Control of records²¹ (4.2.4)
- Internal audits (8.2.2)
- Control of non-conforming product (8.3)
- Analysis of data²² (8.4)
- Improvement, including corrective and preventive action (8.5).

QM Focal Areas

MACCA applies a number of quality-oriented management processes, focussing on the most relevant activities and results. QM priorities refer to processes and activities that are essential to the MAPA products and services and therefore merit greater attention and resources.

Operations QM

As described above, the overall responsibility for safe cleared land lays with the IPs and they have set up their internal QM systems, normally including for example a 100% QC of the cleared land by the team leader and internal QA visits.

For external QA/QC, there is one person in each AMAC designated QM focal point. It is this person's responsibility to prepare a QM plan, including the QA visits, to provide reports and to send monthly updates to MACCA. If critical issues are identified in the field, the report is sent immediately. There is a system providing information on the follow-up action indicating whether the report is closed or still open.

As the operations QM is team-based, the statistics can provide information which teams perform well and which teams have problems. Major non-conformities are captured in the BSC, which is one of the tools used by MACCA to make suggestions for pre-selection of funding to UNMAS.

Operations QM includes monitoring of technical survey, clearance operations, mechanical ground preparation, accidents and incidents etc, but it does not include non-technical survey or community liaison. The QA inspectors aim at visiting each team at least twice per month,²³ with a focus on teams that performed not as good as the others. The AMAC operations assistants look at safety, but also at efficiency / productivity of the teams. This is achieved by focusing on the IPs' plans and task planning tools.

QC sampling has changed over the years: while before always 10% of the area was re-checked by external inspectors, the percentage now depends on the level of confidence a team has achieved during the regular QA visits. The QA completion form includes the level of confidence (high, medium, low). If the level has been medium or low, the AMAC operations assistants will check a percentage of land. The sampling is based on the methodology the IP has applied (i.e. manual checks for manually cleared land, dogs check MDD verified land, etc.)

Mechanical ground preparation is a particular problem because the manual follow-up takes a good deal of time. A Quality Circle meeting addressed this particular issue with the aim to speed-up the

²¹ Control of records also includes a definition of the archiving duration, which can be dictated by a law or set by the organisation, plus a decision how the records will be disposed of at the end of this time.

²² For example, to demonstrate the suitability and effectiveness of the QM system and to evaluate where continual improvement of the effectiveness of the QM system can be made. This includes data on customer satisfaction, conformity to product requirements, characteristics and trends of processes and products, including opportunities for preventive action, and suppliers.

²³ According to MACCA, visits twice per month are currently not achievable, because the number of mine action teams has increased while the external QA capacity has been reduced.



follow-up. Ideas discussed included options for mechanical follow-up, the use of sifters or rakes, and the reduction of the safety distance between deminers based on a risk assessment.

As an additional feedback loop from MACCA to the IPs, the operational productivity is a component of the BSC and shortcomings are being addressed as a part of this tool.

Priority setting

Priority setting is closely linked to the ISO criteria of customer (beneficiary) satisfaction. In order to direct management towards beneficiary orientation, the beneficiaries (clients/customers) of the services have to be identified first, then their requirements related to the services are determined. As a next step, the MAPA should meet these requirements, and there should be regular communication with the beneficiaries regarding their satisfaction with the services.

Formerly, data on the socio-economic impact of ERW and EOD operations was collected by Landmine Impact Assessment Teams (LIAT). MCPA systematically re-visited cleared sites to provide data for a socio-economic impact study. This, plus the data collected during the LIS and recent accident data formed the base for priority setting in the MAPA. In addition, donors and the Afghan Governments often have their own priorities.

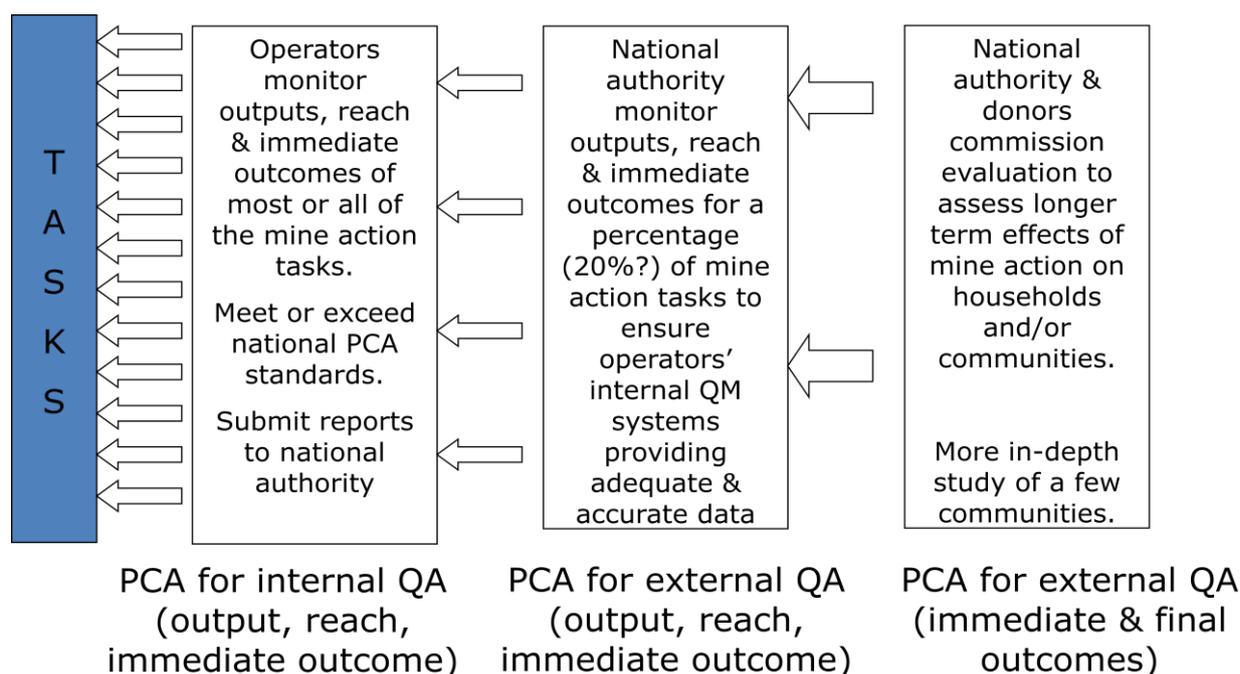
The priorities for survey and clearance are now set by the IPs, who do their own planning. MACCA only provides each organization a full list of SHAs from the IMSMA database, including the impact classification of each hazard. The organizations conduct pre-clearance and post-clearance surveys. The pre-clearance survey defines the impact of ERW as high, medium or low, based on community and/or donor priorities. Even though post demining surveys are conducted, the feedback-loops are not complete; the “so what” question is often not asked or answered, and if it is, the result does not directly feed into better priority-setting.

As a next step to better understanding the impact of demining, different assessments have been undertaken, for example:

- DMC conducted an audit in completed areas focussing on citizen satisfaction
- The GICHD is conducting a livelihood study investigating how the life of the beneficiaries has changes as a result of the demining
- NGOs such as DDG develop their own impact monitoring models for their areas of operations.

The ‘first level’ post-clearance impact assessment (PCA) should be conducted by the operator internally for most or all of the tasks. At the next level, national authorities monitor outputs and immediate outcomes externally for a number of tasks, i.e. initially a small random sample, and more if an organization performs worse than a standard or benchmark. On the next level for external PCA, evaluations would be done for a few communities to assess longer term effects of mine action on households and/or communities. The figure below illustrates a possible national system for priority setting based on internal and external PCA as part of internal and external QA.

Figure 1– Possible national system for post-clearance assessment



Priorities for MRE are set by community based on criteria such as recent accidents, availability of schools (children receive MRE at school), etc. MACCA categorises the community priorities in high, medium or low, and the IPs decide on their own priorities based on this list. As part of the Proposal Review Process, MACCA ensures VTF-funds are used in the highest priority communities and monitors the plans of bilateral MRE to ensure activities are in the high priority of communities. As a result of spot checks, MACCA realized that some NGOs were working not necessarily in highly impacted communities, but rather close to their demining sites; some even worked in communities ranked as 'low'.

As a feed-back loop from the beneficiaries to the MAPA, the most common method is that people address clearance teams nearby if they have requests or complaints. If there is no clearance team, people might go to the nearest AMAC, although that would represent a significant effort for rural people. The MACCA addressed this aspect more systematically through the above-mentioned KAP on how mine action is viewed in Afghanistan and by considering the establishment of a central service phone number. The cost of this phone number would be an estimated US\$15,000 per year, which may be too much to be sustainable in a nationalized system. However, if it is considered important, these costs are not too much. As well, they might go down or could be shared among a number of public services that should be provided to rural communities.

Information Management QM

Proper information management (IM) is vital to transfer data to information and information to knowledge for informed and better decision making. The MACCA IM section has developed its own QM tools and processes to ensure accuracy and user-friendliness at all stages. The QM measures include:

- AMAS and SWPs defining processes and minimum requirements, for example for IP field reports
- Business process and rules document

- Clearly identified and mapped processes for the internal data flow, including control stations and feed-back loops²⁴
- Forms for IPs and MACCA data entry, including the option to provide feedback on the quality of the form
- Checklists for each types of report
- IMSMA-internal control mechanisms, for example the flagging of a geographic co-ordinate that is not in Afghanistan
- GIS specialists checking geographic aspects in more detail, asking – for example – are the SHAs in the right province and district?
- Automatic flagging of specific aspects, for example all SHAs' statuses are recorded as open, worked on or closed. If a SHA of a certain size is still open after 4 months, it is flagged to get attention from the operations section. If an SHA is closed, the system asks for a completion report.
- Quality circle meetings on forms (between MACCA operations and IT) and on utilization of IMSMA, asking for example who needs what information? Or who is actually using the information? The review led to a reduction of forms and to providing the information relevant to the user, for example the field teams do not require information on socio-economic blockage.
- Internal audit: conducted by staff from other sections, identified some gaps, which were subsequently addressed, for example SWP/AMAS were outdated.
- As an additional feedback loop from MACCA to the IPs, the quality of reporting is a component of the BSC and shortcomings are being addressed as a part of this tool

The IPs provide field reports to the AMACs, AMAC verifies ideally 100% of the reports according to the AMAC checklist and provides the report to the MACCA MIS section. Here, data QC is conducted.

Additional measures to avoid errors include:

- The first two steps of data entry are conducted by the same person to ensure continuity, but then the data is verified in another section, where the field form is compared to the data entry. All forms and entries are checked this way and approved when correct.
- A supervisor checks about 50 queries per week

The importance of proper data management for informed decision making can be illustrated on two examples:

QM data entry: Before, the entry of QM data has not followed defines procedures, all reports were recorded in one file without clear order. This meant most of the QM data basically got lost. This has been addressed now: as of 01 January 2011 QM data is being entered into IMSMA^{NG}.

Accident data entry: the demining accidents are entered by the MACCA operations department as they normally receive the initial reports first. In the past, operations maintained an excel copy and IM entered the data into IMSMA; this caused a lot of inconsistencies, making management decision making difficult. About two years ago this process was changed, operations now enters the data directly and is no longer maintaining a separate excel sheet. The quality management section ensures this data is complete and accurate, and verifies it on a monthly basis.

An IM challenge is still qualitative or descriptive data, which means data that cannot easily be quantified and entered into statistics. This includes for example some of the data collected in the post clearance impact assessments, but also recommendations from evaluations or other learning

²⁴ The main data flow example is shown in annex 7

processes. MACCA IM has tested to show this data as add-on to the SHA data, but when checking the use of this option it came out that there had been no queries at all.

4. Findings

QM System

The QM system in the MAPA is better developed than most QM systems in MA programmes worldwide. A lot of approaches have been developed and are being tested and continuously improved. Key steps in this development have been the understanding that MACCA changes its QM approach towards auditing the quality management systems of the IPs, because the responsibility for the quality of their products and services lays with them. The focus of QM will, from MACCA's side, move more and more away from demining team level to the IPs and their QM and planning systems level. MACCA has started monitoring IP plans through review of samples. According to MACCA the planning by IPs improved as a result of this measure.

At the same time, MACCA has worked on QM in its own management processes, focussing on planning, operations, and information management. The ISO and evaluation trainings have helped the MAPA to widen its scope of QM, following well-established practices from the production and development world. It turned out that formalizing and documenting processes alone, including process mapping and formulation of SWPs, helped to achieve better results. In contrast, non-formalized processes have often not achieved their aim.

Once a new understanding of the role of the MACCA in QM and of QM goals was achieved, new tools such as BSC, PMT and Quality Circles were introduced and tested with good success. However, it remains important to review the functioning of the tools and to assess if they help meeting the purpose of QM. For example, MACCA believes the BSC tool helped to improve IP performance, but there is an possibility that the operators have simply learned to meet the requirements of the tool without necessarily improving overall performance.

Further work is also underway to focus more and more on evaluating the outcome and impact level of the programme; this should be achieved by making better use of evaluations, focussing on the change that an intervention is intended to bring and not only on activities. MACCA has started this process, which also includes understanding 'new' aspects such as land rights.

MAPA QM covers a lot of activities; MACCA identified only a few areas of improvement in addition to the above mentioned. This includes better approaches to land release and ERW clearance, better follow-up of IP actions following accident investigations, a closer look at community-based demining teams and community liaison, as well as priority setting of the IPs. In addition, a system to promote and reward innovative ideas would be beneficial.

As a general principle, MACCA looks at not using QM as a 'stick' to punish failure, but also to reward good performance. This is done for example by preparing conformity reports and not only report on non-conformity. However, higher than standard performance is not rewarded because the organization should be able to plan correctly based on their experience: rewarding high performance might otherwise lead to 'under-planning'.

Transition - Towards a Future National System

The transition of the MAPA authority to national ownership is under discussion, even though the situation is that ownership is not on the government agenda right now, which makes a concrete transition plan difficult. However, the need to submit an Article 5 extension may push ANDMA to get

mine action on the agenda. Once mine action is on the agenda, the GoIRA will start dictating the agenda to a degree, which means the process is not entirely in UN hands. Nevertheless, MACCA activities should be directed towards creating a system that is sustainable after transition. A national QM system has to fit in and meet the needs of the GoIRA.

So far, DMC is involved in accreditation, boards of inquiry, AMAS management and internal audit, and three DMC staff attended the ISO course. However, DMC has only 11 staff and no official recognition by the GoIRA. Taking into account its limited capacity, it is clear that a system with frequent QA/QC visits to all sites cannot be maintained. At the same time, quality remains vital as the government will be liable after the handover of the demined areas.²⁵

The lack of governmental authority is a problem, because it means DMC cannot yet accredit organizations. It is also the reason why AMAS are not national, but only UN standards. However, the work on the legal arrangements is ongoing, as well as the translation of AMAS, which should be finalized this year. The AMAS translation is also an opportunity to adjust the standards from “how to do” rather to “what to achieve” which would make them more manageable.

In a future national system, new tasks may evolve for DMC such as procurement, and other GoIRA agencies dealing with construction, public works, health, etc. will be involved in MA. This is already the case for MRE, where the Ministry of Education has assumed an important role. The national authority conducting government tenders – or the departmental tender boards – could be a possible place in future taking on a QM role in MA.

The information management for MA will require clarification once the Afghan National Disaster Management Authority (ANDMA) takes over. The ANDMA field offices report to ANDMA headquarters but not to DMC, because DMC comes under ANDMA. Therefore DMC reports to ANDMA, not the other way around. Currently, the MACCA IM section has no clear national counterpart. Data reduction, including the differentiation between active and archived records, as well as the establishment of simple QM mechanisms will be important next steps.

Dealing with evaluations (for example of post clearance assessments) and other qualitative or descriptive data remains a challenge because not even the UN has a defined process on this aspect yet. Building a knowledge management system would be required, ideally together with a national counterpart organisation.

More roles will need to be taken over by other bodies. This also includes the contact to the beneficiaries. The establishment of a hotline for ERW related issues to the police or ANDMA might be an option.

²⁵ Based on the assumption that citizens actually have the chance to hold the government to account.

Annex 1 – Definitions [ISO 9000:2005]

Quality: degree to which a set of inherent characteristics fulfils requirements.
(The term “quality” can be used with adjectives such as poor, good or excellent. “Inherent”, as opposed to assigned, means existing in something, especially as a permanent characteristic.)

System: set of interrelated or interacting elements.

Management system: to establish policy and objectives and to achieve those objectives.

Quality management system: management system to direct and control an organization with regard to quality.

Quality management: coordinated activities to direct and control an organization with regard to quality.
(Direction and control with regard to quality generally includes establishment of the quality policy and quality objectives, quality planning, quality control, quality assurance and quality improvement.)

Quality policy: overall intentions and direction of an organization related to quality as formally expressed by top management.
(Generally the quality policy is consistent with the overall policy of the organization and provides a framework for the setting of quality objectives. Quality management principles presented in this International Standard can form a basis for the establishment of a quality policy.)

Quality objective: something sought, or aimed for, related to quality.
(Quality objectives are generally based on the organization’s quality policy. Quality objectives are generally specified or relevant functions and levels in the organization.)

Quality planning: part of quality management focused on setting quality objectives and specifying necessary operational processes and related resources to fulfill the quality objectives.
(Establishing quality plans can be part of quality planning.)

Quality control: part of quality management focused on fulfilling quality requirements.
(Note: IMAS addition – “QC relates to the inspection of a finished product. In the case of humanitarian demining, the ‘product’ is safe cleared land. IMAS 04.10, 3.229.)

Quality assurance: part of quality management focused on providing confidence that quality requirements will be fulfilled.
(Note: IMAS addition – The purpose of QA in humanitarian demining is to confirm that management practices and operational procedures for demining are appropriate, are being applied, and will achieve the stated requirement in a safe, effective and efficient manner. Internal QA will be conducted by demining organizations themselves, but external inspections by an external monitoring body should also be conducted.)

Quality improvement: part of quality management focused on increasing the ability to fulfill quality requirements.
(The requirements can be related to any aspect such as effectiveness, efficiency or traceability).

Process: set of interrelated or interacting activities which transform inputs into outputs.
(Inputs to a process are generally outputs of other processes. Processes in an organization are generally planned and carried out under controlled conditions to add value. A process where the



conformity of the resulting product cannot be readily or economically verified is frequently referred to as a “special process”.)

Effectiveness: extend to which planned activities are realized and planned results achieved.

Efficiency: relationship between the result achieved and the resources used.



Annex 2 – MAPA Quality Management Milestones

Year	Quality management system
1990	Start of the Afghan Mine Action Programme, no quality management (QM)
1995	Monitoring, Evaluation and Training Agency (META) established, an Afghan NGO responsible for training, monitoring and evaluation of the demining teams of the operational Afghan NGOs. QM limited to quality assurance (QA) of demining teams.
2004	META changed the traditional monitoring visits to a systematic QA with standard checklists accepted and approved by UNMACCA
2006	The QA capacity of META (55 persons) transferred to UNMACCA and META dissolved
2007	Accreditation of IPs, QA of all teams QM data base established
2008	Need for a better QM system to look at organization level identified ISO QM training for MACCA staff Quality Management Inspection Teams (QMIT) shift to Operations Assistants, in order to also look at planning, coordination, monitoring and evaluation
2009	MACCA internal audit process Transfer of QM responsibility to IPs MACCA role: quality monitoring SWPs developed on QA, accreditation, proposal review process Change from focus on teams to focus on systems & processes Proposal Review Process started Balanced Scorecard introduced
2010	Accreditation review audit process started Project Monitoring Tool introduced
2011	QM database transferred into IMSMA NG Accreditation review audit continued

Annex 3 – QM Questionnaire

QM system responsibilities

1. Are the QM roles and responsibilities of the following clearly defined?
 - a. NMAA
 - b. NMAC
 - c. UN agencies
 - d. Operators
 - e. Other (specify, where relevant)
2. Who is responsible for quality in the UNMAT/NMAA/MAC?
3. Is there any stakeholder or institution (national or international) carrying out external quality audits, monitoring visits or evaluations of the programme? If yes, please provide details.

Standards / Strategy

4. Which laws and standards guide the work of the UNMAT/NMAA/MAC?
5. Which standards define the required performance from MA implementers?
6. Is there a national mine action strategy?

Management

7. How does the UNMAT/NMAA/MAC management system encourage the achievement of the standards and strategy?
8. Does the programme have (if yes please provide details)
 - a. a quality policy
 - b. quality objectives
9. Which quality-oriented management processes have been identified and defined?
 - a. for quality planning
 - b. for quality control
 - c. for quality assurance
 - d. for quality improvement
10. Are responsibilities for the individual processes assigned?
11. Are the processes effective in achieving the required results?
12. Are the procedures, documents and other information describing or supporting the required elements of the quality system known, available, understood and used by the UNMAT/NMAA/MAC personnel?
13. Are the documents and other information used to describe the quality system and processes adequate to achieve the required quality objectives?
14. Is there a mechanism (e.g. working group) established for dialogue among national authorities, MAC, operators and advisors?
 - a. How often does it meet?
 - b. Are minutes or other records maintained?

QM system coverage

15. Scope – Are the following components of mine action covered by the national mine action QM system
 - a. Humanitarian demining financed via...
 - i. grants from international donors?
 - ii. commercial contracts?
 - iii. peacekeeping or other international military missions?
 - iv. government budget?
 - v. development projects?
 - vi. military-military assistance?



- b. Commercial demining (i.e. demining to enable private or public-private investments)?
 - c. Risk education
 - d. Victim assistance
 - e. Stockpile destruction
16. Which areas are currently covered by QM processes? Where do you see a need for (better) coverage?
- a. Non-technical survey
 - b. Technical survey
 - c. Manual clearance
 - d. Mechanical clearance
 - e. Land release
 - f. Medical support to MA operations
 - g. Accident investigation
 - h. QM systems of MA implementers
 - i. Contracting
 - j. Outcome of land released
 - k. Impact of land released
 - l. Management of standards
 - m. Data management
 - n. UNMAT/NMAA/MAC administration
 - o. Standards & strategy review
 - p. Other (please specify)
17. How does the QM system address the overall aspects of
- a. safety
 - b. efficiency
 - c. effectiveness?
18. What is the true legal status of the existing QM system components – do they have force under national law? Do they apply only 'inside' the mine action sector, or to all activities related in some way to explosives contamination and mine action?

Documentation

19. How are the following documented:
- a. Quality policy
 - b. Quality objectives
 - c. Quality processes
20. Are the key documents available in the local language(s)

Resources

21. Which resources are allocated to QM? (breakdown by organization where necessary)
- a. Human resources
 - b. Competence, training and awareness
 - c. Infrastructure / work environment
 - d. Financial resources
22. Are the resources sufficient to implement and maintain the quality management system and continually improve its effectiveness?
23. Are the resources sufficient to enhance customer satisfaction by meeting customer requirements?

Beneficiary-oriented processes

24. Have the beneficiaries (clients/customers) of the services been identified?

25. Have the requirements of the beneficiaries related to the services been identified and determined?
26. Is UNMAT/NMAA/MAC able to meet these requirements?
27. Is there a regular communication with the beneficiaries with regard to their satisfaction with the services?

QM system design

28. Please summarize the milestones in designing and implementing the national QM system so far.
29. What are the priorities for improvements?

Annex 4 – List of Documents consulted

ISO 9000 series

Building on Success: the London Conference on Afghanistan, London 31 January – 1 February 2006 (Afghan Compact)

Kabul International Conference on Afghanistan: Afghan National Development Strategy, 20 July 2010

Mine Action Strategic Guideline 2008-2013

Mine Action Programme of Afghanistan (MAPA): 1390 Integrated Operational Framework (IOF), Mine Action Policy and Mine Data Analysis, December 2010

DAC Principles for the Evaluation of Development Assistance, OECD (1991)

Glossary of Terms Used in Evaluation, in 'Methods and Procedures in Aid Evaluation', OECD (1986)

Glossary of Evaluation and Results Based Management (RBM) Terms, OECD (2000)

Ted Paterson, Faiz Paktian, and William Fryer: Afghanistan Country Mission Report, Evaluation of EC Mine Action: Caucasus-Central Asia Region, Geneva, September 2008

Tietze, Ulrich: Quality Management and Operational Efficiency at OMAR Afghanistan. Report of the First Intervention May 2006

Priority Setting for ERW Clearance Programmes, 2009 Meeting of Experts of the States Parties to CCW Protocol V, Discussion Paper 6, presented by the Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining



Annex 5 – List of Persons met

Interviews – Afghanistan		
Data item number	Interviewees	Details
1	Dr. Aimal Safi, MACCA, Chief of Quality Management	aimal.safi@macca.org.af
2	Mohammad Shafiq Yosufi, MACCA, Project Cycle Manager	mohammad.shafiq@macca.org.af
3	Abigail Hartley, MACCA, Senior Programme Officer	abigail.harthely@macca.org.af
4	Alan McDonald, MACCA, Chief of Staff	alan.mcdonald@macca.org.af
5	Mohammad Sediq Rashid, MACCA, Chief of Operations	mohammad.sediq@macca.org.af
6	Mohammad Wakil, MACCA, Senior Planning Officer	mohammad.wakil@macca.org.af
7	Hansie Heymans, MACCA, Head of IT Section	hansie.heyman@macca.org.af
8	Shamsullah Yousufzai, MACCA, IT Officer	shamsullah.yousufzai@macca.org.af
9	Mohammad Akbar Oriakhil, MACCA, Head of Central AMAC Kabul	akbar.oriakhil@macca.org.af
10	Nazir Amarkhail, MACCA, Operations Assistant AMAC Charikar	nazir.amarkhail@macca.org.af
11	Eng. Mir. Mohammad Amin Haidari, ANDMA, Head of ANDMA in Parwan province	aminhaidari75@yahoo.com
12	Lene Rasmussen, DDG Desk Officer for Afghanistan and Sri Lanka	lene.rasmussen@drc.dk
13	Southern Craib, DDG Program Manager, Kabul	pm.afghanistan@drc.dk
14	Jussi Uhrman, DDG Technical Advisor, Kabul	jussi.uhrman@drc.dk
15	Hakim Noorzai, DDG Head of Operations, Kabul, Main Office	head.operation@drc.dk
16	Mohammad Tahir, DDG Operation Officer, Kabul, Main Office	mahmadtahir@yahoo.com

Annex 6 – Context Analysis Afghanistan

Conflict and political development

KEY FEATURES OF THE HISTORY, SOCIETY AND ECONOMY

At 647,500 km² (about 50% larger than Iraq), Afghanistan is a mountainous and ethnically diverse country. While estimates vary widely, the largest ethnic group among the estimated 28 million people is Pashtun (somewhere between 40 and 54%), followed in size by Tajik (30%+), Hazara (8 to 15%), and Uzbek. The country's borders cut through the traditional homelands of many ethnic groups, leaving Pashtun divided between Afghanistan and Pakistan, and the Tajik and Uzbek Afghans split from those in the Central Asian republics.

Efforts by successive national governments to exert effective authority over the country's isolated and diverse regions have remained a recurrent theme in Afghanistan's political economy to this day. The difficulties experienced by central governments have been magnified by interference from neighboring countries, often facilitated by the cross-border ethnic and religious affiliations, which also bolster informal trade (i.e. smuggling), which further reinforces the split between the central government and the regions.

Starting with the Soviet incursion in 1979, Afghanistan became a central theatre in the Cold War. The conflict has taken its toll in the form of repeated and massive migrations of people plus the growth of war economies (particularly, opium), which provide revenues and regional-ethnic powerbases for insurgents and numerous warlords (or, more politely, "commanders").

HISTORY OF CONFLICT

The 1979 Soviet invasion led governments in Muslim and Western countries to channel arms and money to support the anti-communist forces, igniting a civil war. This displaced millions of Afghans to Iran and Pakistan, which then provided bases for *mujahedeen* factions. Fierce resistance wore down the Soviet forces, who exited following the 1988 Geneva Accords.

Unfortunately, there was little acceptance of the Geneva Accords among the *mujahedeen* and the civil war continued. The pro-Soviet regime survived until 1992, abetted by the disunity of *mujahedeen* factions. While a government of sorts was formed in Kabul, it remained under constant attack by other factions, reducing much of the capital to ruins.

The stalemate only ended with the sudden emergence of the Taliban movement. In late 1994 the Taliban took Kandahar, followed by Herat in 1995 and Kabul in 1997. Some of the anti-Taliban forces united under the Northern Alliance, retaining control of about 20% of the country. The conflict between the Northern Alliance and the Taliban continued until late 2001, when the US-led coalition threw its weight behind the former. By December 2001, Northern Alliance forces had captured Kabul and most major centres and the Afghanistan Interim Authority was installed.

However, the Taliban were not destroyed. Initially, much of the effort to eliminate the Taliban was left in the hands of regional warlord/"commanders" financed by the US-led coalition. This proved unsuccessful, forcing other NATO members to commit additional troops. However, the Taliban has re-assumed de facto control over large areas of Afghanistan. Because of this, enhanced security is the central issue in Afghanistan. It is far and away the principal concern of most Afghans and a pre-condition for revitalizing the legitimate economy and for the government to establish even a minimal degree of credibility. Evidence suggests that, initially, this task was botched and security for most Afghans worsened.

Progress on the security/peace-building agenda requires wholesale reform of the country's security sector. A national army and police force have been established, but much more needs to be done to train and equip these forces. As well, multiple militias must be demobilized and excess arms and munitions destroyed.

Nature of the contamination

Explosives contamination in Afghanistan stems from:

- The Soviet intervention – 1979-89
- The campaigns by the *mujahedeen* against the Najibullah regime – 1989-92
- The civil war among various *mujahedeen* factions – 1992-95
- The civil war between *mujahedeen* factions and the Taliban – 1995-2001
- The U.S.-led coalition campaign to overthrow the Taliban – 2001

As yet, no one has been able to provide a comprehensive assessment of the problem, for three reasons:

- The Afghanistan programme began when “humanitarian”²⁶ demining was an emerging discipline, with limited capacity to conduct systematic surveys;
- Mine action personnel have rarely had secure access to the entire country;
- Continued fighting resulted in new contamination.

The most comprehensive picture of the contamination was provided by the Afghan Landmine Impact Survey (ALIS), completed in late 2004. It reduced the total suspected hazardous area (SHA) remaining for clearance from about 850 km² to 715 km² (14%). However, the discovery of new contamination plus slow updating of records led the remaining SHA figure to creep-up again, reaching a maximum of 852 km² in September 2007. It has fallen since, due both to records clean-up and to more rapid ‘release’ of land suspected of contamination (an issue discussed later), largely through enhanced survey activities.

The ALIS also provided a new way of assessing the impact of contamination in Afghanistan. As with LIS conducted in other countries, it focused more on communities rather than individual SHA and found that 2,368 communities (8% of all communities) – home to 4.2 million people (15% of Afghanistan's population) – were impacted by explosives contamination. Twelve provinces accounted for 75% of the impacted communities, with Kabul and Parwan in the Central Region being the most impacted.

As of end 2010, there were 6,628 hazards remaining affecting 641 km² and 2,082 communities throughout the country. Every month an average of 52 Afghans were injured or killed by landmines or other explosive remnants of war. 60% of the casualties were children, and 74% of the casualties were caused by explosive remnants of war (ERW) or unexploded ordnances (UXO).²⁷

History of the mine action programme for Afghanistan

The evolution of MAPA can be divided into a number of phases:

- Tentative beginnings (1988-90) – the initial, failed efforts by the UN and (more successfully) international NGOs to initiate mine action activities.

²⁶ In mine action, ‘humanitarian’ usually means simply ‘non-military’ and not for a commercial purpose. Thus, humanitarian mine action may support broader humanitarian, reconstruction, peace-building, and development programmes

²⁷ MACCA Fast Facts Data as of end 2010, generated from the national database IMSMA



- Establishment and expansion (1990-96) – the creation of the first Afghan Mine Action ‘NGOs’ and the build-up of both the NGOs and the programme coordination mechanism, based in Islamabad.
- Relocating to Afghanistan (1996-2001) – the long process of relocating programme planning and management functions from Pakistan to Afghanistan.
- MAPA in the Post-Taliban era (2002-present) – the beginnings of real engagement with legitimate national authorities and the broader international community active in post-Taliban Afghanistan.

The MAPA is now entering a new phase, characterized by a tighter focus on medium-term performance targets and the potential need to transition to national ownership.

The MAPA partners faced a daunting agenda once the Taliban regime collapsed in late-2001. First they had to resume operations, requiring extensive re-equipping to replace the looted equipment. They also had to undertake a rapid assessment of the new hazards stemming from coalition bombing – particularly the unexploded cluster munitions.

Clearance priorities also needed to be altered, both to deal with the cluster bombs and to address the population movements as displaced persons returned to their home communities. The MRE programme had to be overhauled, with women instructors re-engaged and programmes to reach refugee camps and transit centers. Large-scale reconstruction projects, particularly roads and airports, also required demining support.

The installation of the interim government also meant the end of the UNOCHA mandate, and the UN transferred MACCA to UNMAS. As well, MACCA had to move from Islamabad to Kabul just as hundreds of other aid agencies, embassies, and NGOs were establishing offices in the capital.

On 28 July 2002, President Karzai announced that Afghanistan would sign the Ottawa Convention and, in March 2003, Afghanistan became a State Party to the Convention.

In mid-2007, Dr. Haider Reza, an Afghan, was appointed MACA Programme Director. Shortly thereafter, an Afghan was also appointed Operations Manager. Thus, for the first time, key posts in MACCA headquarters have been nationalized. The Department for Mine Clearance (DMC) became the Government designated focal point for mine action.

MACCA has supported efforts by government ministries and the Afghan Red Crescent Society (ARCS) to strengthen their capacities to assume responsibility for MRE and services to persons with disabilities. These efforts have started to bear fruit, and in 2007 MACA signed MoUs with three ministries as well as the ARCS and ICRC as a basis for further progress.

Current status of mine action

THE MINE ACTION PROGRAMME FOR AFGHANISTAN (MAPA)

MAPA is far more than MACCA alone; it comprises over 20 distinct organizations supported by donor contributions. A number of these organizations (particularly the Afghan and international demining NGOs) are extremely large; some with thousands of staff. These have operated successfully for a decade or more in a challenging environment, and are extremely capable by any reasonable standards and certainly within the context of Afghanistan today.

OPERATIONS REFORMS

While MACCA and its MAPA partners did a good job in expanding and then consolidating operations in the five years following the fall of the Taliban, they were slow in introducing demining innovations

in the global demining industry. Starting in 2007, MACCA has introduced a number of reforms to catch-up, and is formulating its own innovations to cope with the specific challenges – in particular, insecurity plus the scope of the contamination within a diverse country – in Afghanistan.

‘Full service’ demining NGOs

A number of the Afghan demining NGOs were established to perform quite distinct roles – MCPA for survey; META (now defunct) for QA and training; MDC to breed, train, and supply mine detection dogs (MDD) plus handlers to the survey and clearance NGOs. In brief, these NGOs provided complementary services and operated more like a conglomerate (with MACCA as the headquarters) than as independent entities.

With the expansion of the programme since the mid-1990s, MACCA had to provide ever more headquarters services to coordinate operations, leading to the establishment of Area Mine Action Centers (AMACs), which further ‘UN-ised’ the programme and progressively reduced the independence of the Afghan NGOs. Coordination costs came to dominate the benefits of specialization. The model became cumbersome and made it increasingly difficult to determine responsibility for either successes or failures. It also complicated the introduction of demining innovations from elsewhere because two or three organizations were involved in every demining task.

Over the past years, MACCA has promoted the shift to ‘full service’ demining NGOs, each with survey and clearance capacities and a range of tools (manual, mechanical, dogs). This means that only one organization is assigned to a task, and each organization can introduce innovations without disrupting the policies and procedures of others.

Enhanced survey process

Mine action is highly dependent on both ‘big picture’ and ‘micro’ surveys to obtain both technical data (i.e. on contamination) and socio-economic data (the impacts of contamination and demining). Such data is essential for planning and prioritization, and to provide an account of results achieved. Good survey capabilities do not guarantee a good demining programme (because survey data may not be analyzed to inform decision-makers), but a good demining programme invariably implies good survey (and information management) capabilities. MACCA has introduced a number of changes to survey processes since the ALIS in 2003-05, including the deployment of Landmine Impact Assessment Teams (LIAT) to look at the impact of contamination on communities and the conversion of SHAs into more precise polygons (i.e. the suspected shape and area of the SHA), which often results in a reduction in the recorded area of the SHA.

Demining reforms

MACA has also pushed to get the Afghan demining NGOs to update their standing operating procedures (SOP) to introduce innovations that have proved successful in other countries, for example *One-man drill* (one deminer per clearance lane), smaller demining teams / sections, and the deminers are cross-trained in explosive ordnance disposal (EOD).

With better equipment and additional training, the smaller demining teams can deploy to an SHA and start immediately with technical survey, shifting immediately into the clearance drill once the pattern of mines is discovered. Land which is outside the pattern of mines (plus a safety buffer) is then checked quickly (e.g. with dogs, machines, or sample survey) and released as ‘no apparent risk’ if no indications of additional devices are discovered.

Initial tests suggest that an average of perhaps 30% of SHA can be released as ‘no apparent risk’ using risk assessment measures costing one- to two-thirds as much as full clearance. This approach

requires good team leaders who have the discretion to make their own decisions based on findings on the ground.

Revised criteria for classifying impact

MACCA has continued to improve the systems through which hazards are classified as high, medium and low impact. Hazards with which a civilian casualty is associated will automatically be classified as high impact. The remaining hazards such as blockage caused to agriculture or water etc, are classified depending on a cumulative score resulting from the factors listed in a table MACCA produced.

Regionalization of operators

MACCA has also requested the various demining operators to reallocate their assets considering their ethic base when establishing new projects and to consider cost efficiency, for example to close down some project offices if they were not really needed, to make best use of the limited resources. This is feasible now that these NGOs are 'full-service' operators, and should simplify logistics and coordination, plus reduce the costs of maintaining regional offices.

New business model

MACCA has introduced a series of measures that, together, constitute a new 'business model' for the demining financed via the UN. This has three inter-related components:

- 1. 'projectisation' – requesting IPs take a projectised approach – where projects are made up of a number of tasks delivering clear and measurable and outcomes indicated before contracting projects covering entire districts (e.g. those with few SHA) or clusters of highly impacted communities – the first of these have just been awarded following an RFP
- demining services in insecure areas – MACCA has requested proposals from the Afghan NGOs for community-based demining pilot projects in insecure areas.

These are not directly competitive – each NGO has been asked for a proposal for areas in which they have strong roots (e.g. DAFA in the South; OMAR in the East), which should allow them to operate with some degree of security once local leaders assure the NGO of their consent.

2. the introduction of greater competition

MACCA designs projects with clear and measurable outcomes which are put to tender through the UNOPS process

- open RFP inviting proposals from accredited firms and NGOs for projects in reasonably secure areas
- restricted RFP inviting proposals from NGOs with adequate 'grounding' in insecure areas, with funding provided to the soundly conceived proposals

3. switching from *ex ante* to *ex post* control – a change from controlling inputs and activities to paying for outputs that have met quality assurance standards. This will allow the NGOs to manage without seeking prior approval from MACCA for every variance from plan.

The new business model promises a number of benefits, the chief of which are:

- a focus on outcomes which can be measured
- service delivery in insecure areas, which will lessen the impact of contamination on the communities and could make an important contribution to peace-building
- the NGOs will be stimulated by greater competition to enhance their capabilities and become more successful while, at the same time, achieving greater independence. This will be a great boon as the transition to government responsibility for the policy and



coordination functions is likely to go through rocky periods, and strong, independent NGOs could make all the difference through difficult stages

- efficiencies over time, as the poorly managed organizations shrink, releasing resources to the better managed ones
- the development of capacities within these NGOs which would allow them to branch out into other lines of work within Afghanistan, or international demining work.

Mine Action Strategies

The Afghan Mine Action Strategy is focused on achieving the Afghan Compact²⁸ and mine-ban treaty (Ottawa Convention) benchmarks:

“By end-2010, in line with Afghanistan’s Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and Afghanistan’s Ottawa Convention obligations, 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; and by end-2010, all unsafe, unserviceable and surplus ammunition will be destroyed.”²⁹

The Ottawa Convention requires – among other – that all anti-personnel landmines in Afghanistan will be cleared by 2013.

To support these goals, MAPA sets clear targets, including the increase of the number of mechanical assets supported by manual clearance teams.

The Afghan MAPA follows the Mine Action Strategic Guideline 2008-2013. It includes operational plan deliverables on survey, marking, clearance and MRE, as well as capacity building of and transition of authority to DMC and other national authorities. It contains a number of sub-strategies:

- 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 demining sub-strategy explicitly encourages 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.”³⁰

Government agencies involved in mine action

MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS (MFA)

MFA was designated the lead ministry for mine action following the country’s accession to the APMBC and for a number of years did an excellent job in chairing the Mine Action Coordination Group and in representing Afghanistan in international forums. However, as is often the case in fragile states, commitment hinges on a small number of champions, and when the Deputy Minister moved to another position, mine action was no longer a priority for MFA.

²⁸ Building on Success : the London Conference on Afghanistan, London 31 January – 1 February 2006

²⁹ Afghan Compact, page 6

³⁰ Mine Action Strategic Guideline 2008-2013, page 29

International experience suggests that foreign affairs ministries should not hold overall responsibility for mine action in a mine-affected country – they often do a good job in international representation, but do poorly on the oversight of programme policy and implementation. However, participation in the Ottawa process is important for Afghanistan, so MFA should certainly be a part of the national mine action authority in the future.

DEPARTMENT FOR MINE CLEARANCE (DMC)

DMC was established initially in 1989 via a *Mukharai* or executive order of the Najibullah regime. It was to be under an inter-ministerial committee comprising National Security, Defence, and Interior, but this never functioned so DMC was appended to the Disaster Preparedness Department. It has remained in existence ever since, although with scant resources and, hence, modest capacity. However, its role as the government focal point for mine action was reaffirmed by the Inter-Ministerial Body and DMC was collocated with MACCA into the same compound.

DMC is now part of the proposed Afghan National Disaster Management Authority (ANDMA), which itself will be under an inter-ministerial committee chaired by the 2nd Vice-President. DMC reports directly to the ANDMA Director. It has about 10 managerial and technical officers, plus support staff, all based in Kabul. ANDMA itself has seven zonal offices, which could provide administrative support for any DMC activities outside Kabul (although, in practice, DMC liaises with the larger and better-equipped AMACs).

The Director of DMC understands that it maybe part of a transition process lasting until 2013, at which point it may assume decision-making authority for the national mine action programme though this is yet to be confirmed. While starved of resources, DMC clearly has some capacity, and the staff have sound knowledge of public service policies and procedures. However, success in capacity development hinges on a champion within DMC who can drive the process forward.

MINISTRY OF EDUCATION (MOE)

The MoE is committed to assuming responsibilities on such issues as MRE and inclusive education. The cooperation between MACCA and the MoE has been good and fruitful, and the MACCA support to the Ministry's efforts has been modest but effective.

MINISTRY OF PUBLIC HEALTH

The MoPH is responsible for providing medical care and physical rehabilitation services to people with disabilities, including landmine survivors, and has established a Disability Unit under the Director General of Primary Health Care/Essential Services. MACCA supported the capacity development.

MINISTRY OF LABOUR, SOCIAL AFFAIRS, MARTYRS AND DISABLED

MoLSAMD is responsible for addressing social stigmatization of persons with disabilities, including landmine survivors. As such, the MACCA has encouraged the Ministry to participate in the efforts to develop a national action plan for disability programmes. MoLSAMD and UNOPS (on behalf of MACCA) have signed an MoU with goals to:

- support the implementation and monitoring of advocacy, awareness and social support services
- chair the NGO coordination unit and the inter-ministerial coordination group on disability
- support disabled person's organizations
- advise on inclusive employment efforts.

International Engagement

There has been significant donor support to mine action in Afghanistan. End 2001, MACCA and its implementing partners responded effectively to the new challenges, while donors quickly provided funding to expand operations. Funding in 2002 increased almost fivefold to over \$65 million and, in 2003, total receipts exceeded \$75 million, with funding for reconstruction rising to almost a quarter of the total. In addition, MAPA agencies made significant contributions to the destruction of weapons, ammunition, and landmine stockpiles as part of the Afghan New Beginnings Programme (ANBP). Longer term, donor contributions to the MAPA averaged about \$60 million per year. The U.S. was the principal donor, followed by the European Commission and Japan. Approximately one-quarter of all funds went directly to an implementing organization, while the remainder was channelled via the UNMAS Voluntary Trust Fund or other UN mechanisms.

Future outlook

The MAPA has achieved much in terms of clearance output, MRE and VA. At the same time, parts of the transition to national ownership have been successfully completed, namely for MRE and VA. The key challenge remains the full nationalization of the programme. About 18 months ago, MACCA has drafted a Partnership Framework (“road map”) outlining how DMC will gradually take over core functions from MACCA, but it has not been signed off by UNMAS, DMC, and GoIRA.

With the organizational changes made, MACCA moved from a managing organization to a co-ordination body, which is its designated role, and may also become the subsequent role of DMC. This change gave greater responsibility to the implementing partners. The implementing partners moved to full service NGOs and are as such competent partners for donors.

; 2013 is the 10-year deadline for clearance of all AP landmines in Afghanistan. It is unlikely this goal can be met, and one has to consider conflicting priorities. As described above, most accidents occur with ERW/UXOs these days, and no longer with AP mines. Furthermore, the Afghanistan Compact and the Afghan National Development Strategy (ANDS) focus on development goals rather than clearing AP-mines in low priority areas.

Annex 7 – Process Map for Centralized Data Entry in the MACCA

