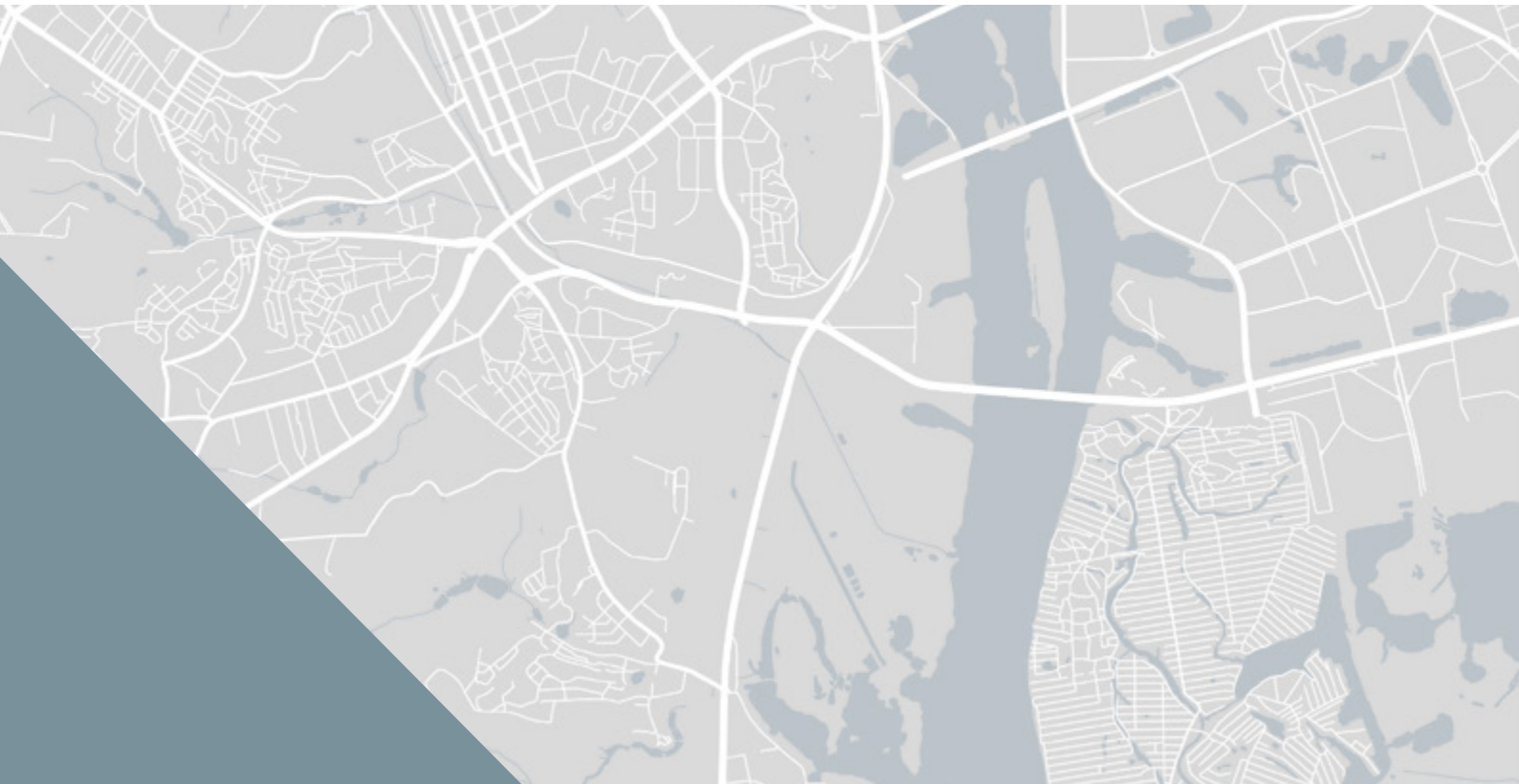
GICHD

MAPPING OF THE EXPLOSIVE ORDNANCE RISK EDUCATION SECTOR IN UKRAINE



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LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

EORE	explosive ordnance risk education
GICHD	Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining
IMSMA	information management system for mine action
NGO	non-governmental organisation
SESU	State Emergency Service of Ukraine
UN	United Nations
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The GICHD has been supporting Ukraine since 2012. During that time, it has cultivated formal and informal partnerships with a range of national, regional and international partners. In 2019, it began providing specific support for explosive ordnance risk education (EORE). Recent GICHD activities include contributing to the preparation of, and translating into Ukrainian, the publication by the Explosive Ordnance Risk Education Advisory Group entitled 'Questions and Answers on Explosive Ordnance Risk Education for Ukraine' and translating into Ukrainian the GICHD e-learning course entitled 'Introduction to EORE Essentials'. In addition, the GICHD regularly participates in the Explosive Ordnance Risk Education Working Group in Ukraine (EORE Working Group) and provides technical support in EORE to several authorities and mine action operators.

After consultations with diverse stakeholders, the GICHD concluded that a mapping exercise would be the best way of continuing its support for the delivery of effective and efficient EORE initiatives in Ukraine. The mapping exercise aimed to shed light on the EORE sector in Ukraine and identify areas for improvement. With this in mind, the following deliverables were chosen for the mapping exercise:

- **Deliverable 1**: A mapping of the key EORE administrative, coordination and operational bodies and processes in Ukraine.
- **Deliverable 2**: A mapping of the stakeholders, partners and actors involved in or that can support EORE in Ukraine.
- **Deliverable 3**: Analysis of the humanitarian context in Ukraine as it relates to EORE and recommendations for improving the effectiveness of the EORE response.

Methodology

The mapping was undertaken using a mix of qualitative research methods. A total of 37 documents were used. These comprised publications, articles, standards, surveys, guidelines, presentations and individual images, including from EORE materials and social media. Key EORE data, including on accidents involving explosive ordnance, were also reviewed. In addition, 26 semi-structured key informant interviews were conducted, both in person and remotely. The key informants were from administrative, coordination and operational bodies and a mix of international and Ukrainian organisations.

It should be noted that the context in Ukraine is subject to rapid change. The findings of this report are based on data collected during the first quarter of 2024.

FINDINGS

Deliverable 1

It appears that there is no universally agreed central focal point for EORE in Ukraine. Instead, several entities of the Government of Ukraine are concerned. The EORE architecture in Ukraine thus encompasses a range of government authorities, UN agencies and both certified and non-certified international and national organisations. Given the numerous entities and the various relationships between them, it is understandable that the EORE architecture in Ukraine may appear complex. This complexity is carried over to the operations on the ground.

Some respondents considered the certification process too complicated and that it focused more on administrative issues than the quality of the operations. The complexity of the process seems to deter smaller organisations from applying for certification. There was also the suggestion, however, that those seeking certification were simply not well prepared enough for the process.

The sheer number of actors working in Ukraine, especially since the full-scale invasion in 2022, makes the quality management and coordination of EORE activities complex, and the duplication of EORE activities has been reported. The situation is further complicated by the presence of both certified and non-certified actors and the widespread use of digital EORE.

At the government level, more resources and capacity are required, or need to be reallocated, to ensure that the demands of the EORE sector are met.

Deliverable 2

The main providers of EORE in Ukraine are international and national NGOs. In addition, some government entities also conduct EORE. EORE sessions in Ukraine include adult and child-focused sessions and dedicated sessions for particular groups such as humanitarian and development workers, first responders, community focal points and farmers.

EORE messages are delivered in person and online, and some organisations also include messaging on conflict preparedness and protection. The delivery of digital EORE in Ukraine is noteworthy and is a nod to the high rate of digital literacy in the country. The widespread use of social media also entails some risk, however, as some social media posts portray unsafe behaviour as heroic acts, thereby sending an incorrect message.

EORE is delivered by dedicated EORE teams or teams that also conduct other activities. All respondents reported that their organisations used teams composed of both sexes and that data on sex, age and disability were collected on EORE beneficiaries, although data disaggregated by sex and age was more common than data on disability. Ukraine has a comprehensive information management system for mine action (IMSMA) in place, and a significant amount of work is done to collect, collate and distribute data on casualties of explosive ordnance, including data disaggregated according to sex, age and, in some cases, disability. The focus, however, seems to be on the collection of data rather than on their analysis to adapt and improve EORE practices.

Deliverable 3

There is without a doubt a need for EORE in Ukraine. Data from the IMSMA suggests that men are at greater risk from explosive ordnance than women and that certain professions are particularly at risk. Farmers are one such profession as they are compelled to enter dangerous areas to make a living. As such, EORE projects should focus not only on the dissemination of messages and on awareness-raising but also on the creation of an enabling environment that will promote safer behaviour. This could be done through the introduction of livelihood projects for farmers affected by explosive ordnance. Another at-risk group that was consistently mentioned by respondents

was people living on the front line or in an occupied area. The restriction of access to the 20-kilometre buffer zone prevents many of the certified EORE operators from reaching these groups in person. Digital EORE is one method that has been used to reach them. Organisations that do not conduct EORE as their main activity can also share EORE messages if the other humanitarian and development activities take them to areas in need.

Further collaboration is one way of improving the effectiveness of EORE in Ukraine. This involves the removal of any division between international and national entities working towards the same goal. This would enable improved coordination, which was mentioned by respondents as a major need within the EORE sector in Ukraine. Moreover, an accessible certification process is important both for coordination and for quality management. However, more resources and capacity may be required to improve quality management.

Measurement of the effectiveness of EORE remains challenging in Ukraine. While EORE operators are very capable of tracking and reporting on their activities, and a lot of effort is put into measuring and reporting on immediate outputs, operators are less confident about their ability to understand and measure outcomes and impact. A need for training in the management of EORE was mentioned several times by respondents, which might be a way of improving the measurement of outcomes and impact.

CONCLUSION

The need for EORE in Ukraine is clear. It is likely that explosive ordnance contamination, particularly that which has occurred since the full-scale invasion in February 2022, will be an intergenerational problem. While the increase in EORE activities that has occurred since then is much needed, it has created additional needs and challenges in relation to the effective and efficient management of EORE.

The results of this mapping exercise point to a multilayered and complex EORE architecture, comprising numerous entities with roles and relationships that are not fully understood. Moreover, resources at the ministerial level seem stretched and may not be enough to oversee the EORE sector in Ukraine effectively. Coordination is seen as a huge challenge, complicated by the presence of a mix of certified and non-certified EORE providers and the widespread use of digital EORE. Similarly, there are challenges relating to certification, which is seen as administratively burdensome and inaccessible to smaller organisations. Given that the explosive ordnance problem will be present for years to come, capacity development and localisation of EORE is of crucial importance, and efforts should be made to support such initiatives.

One of the risk-taking groups in Ukraine is 'intentional' or 'forced' risk takers.[1] Partnerships with other humanitarian and development actors that can provide alternatives that remove the need for the risk-taking behaviour is one way of supporting this group. Moreover, the critical analysis of available data, in order to adjust EORE messages with the aim of bringing about behaviour change, can contribute to better-adapted and more effective EORE. Finally, the measurement of EORE outcomes can help track progress towards behaviour change.

The EORE sector in Ukraine is already highly developed with plenty of relevant expertise, and the potential for more effective and efficient EORE is present in the country.

[1] United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), *IMAS Mine Risk Education Best Practice Guidebook 1*, 2005, accessed July 24, 2024, https://reliefweb.int/report/world/imas-mine-risk-education-best-practice-guidebook-1.

RECOMMENDATIONS

A list of recommendations has been made on the basis of the findings of this mapping exercise. The recommendations can be summarized as follows:

Improve coordination of EORE stakeholders and activities: Currently, coordination of EORE stakeholders and activities in Ukraine is complex. It is suggested that a workshop be organised, led by the Government of Ukraine and with the participation of relevant stakeholders, to discuss how coordination could be improved.

Make the certification process more accessible: Smaller organisations providing EORE are interested in becoming certified, but they do not yet have the means to undertake the process as currently exists. Given the current emergency context in Ukraine, it is suggested that there be a simplified and more rapid short-term certification process that would enable EORE activities to get under way and give the operators enough time to prepare for full certification.[2]

Increase integration of EORE messaging into the actions of other sectors: It is suggested that an increase in coordination and integration with other humanitarian and development actors could be a way of addressing the intentional / forced risk-taking groups and reaching otherwise inaccessible areas such as the 20-kilometre buffer zone.

Adopt more behaviour change strategies: It is suggested that more behaviour change techniques be used in EORE messaging. For example, a comprehensive analysis of the barriers to and enablers of behaviour change in Ukraine could be conducted.

Improve the analysis of the data collected: There is a very good data set for EORE in Ukraine, but more analysis of those data could help efforts to improve the overall effectiveness of EORE.

Develop technical guidelines for EORE: Specific guidelines should be developed and shared with the EORE community with a view to further harmonising EORE. The current section on EORE in the Ukrainian national mine action standards could be updated and issued as a separate standard, available free of charge.

Provide more capacity development and training opportunities for all interested stakeholders: There is widespread interest among practitioners in learning more about EORE management. A series of EORE management courses should be organised, open to all interested stakeholders. This may also help regularise the unofficial status of many of the non-certified organisations providing EORE in the country. Given the widespread use of social media depicting unsafe behaviour, EORE messaging training could be conducted with social media influencers, news journalists or other professionals who rely on social media, as a way of increasing the effectiveness of EORE messaging.

Organise workshops for the sharing of expertise: A series of technical workshops could be organised to discuss different EORE methodologies based on specific areas of expertise, such as social and behaviour change, communications and adult and child education. Partnerships between organisations and individuals with different expertise should be envisaged.

Integrate the measurement of outcomes into EORE: Data collection in Ukraine is generally very good, but there is insufficient monitoring of the achievement of desired outcomes and impacts. Moreover, it is suggested that there be further discussions on the development of a specific theory of change for EORE and on standardisation of the way of measuring activities and outputs.

Ensure the sustainability of EORE: The sustainability of EORE is crucial in a context like Ukraine. Efforts should be made to prioritise local approaches to EORE. Moreover, if operators work directly with ministries, this can help ensure sustainability.

[2] There is currently an initiative to digitalise the certification process. This may be a solution for simplifying the process and making it more accessible.

INTRODUCTION

The GICHD has been supporting Ukraine since 2012 and has cultivated formal and informal partnerships with a range of national, regional and international partners. In 2019, the GICHD began providing specific support for EORE. EORE refers to activities that seek to reduce the risk of injury from explosive ordnance by raising awareness of the issue among women, girls, boys and men, in accordance with their different vulnerabilities, roles and needs, and by promoting behavioural change. Core activities include public information dissemination, education and training.[3]

The specific support that has been provided to Ukraine by the GICHD includes the coorganisation of a regional round table in Pokrovsk and the translation into Ukrainian of the publication by the Explosive Ordnance Risk Education Advisory Group entitled 'Questions and Answers on Explosive Ordnance Risk Education for Ukraine' and of the Centre's own e-learning course entitled 'Introduction to EORE Essentials'. At the time of writing, over 200 participants have completed the course in Ukrainian. The GICHD also regularly participates in meetings of the EORE Working Group in Ukraine and provides technical support in EORE to several authorities and mine action operators.

In a concerted effort to enhance its support for EORE in Ukraine, and after consultations with diverse stakeholders, the GICHD concluded that a mapping exercise would be the best way of continuing its support for the delivery of EORE in Ukraine and of ensuring that EORE was even more efficient and effective and had an even greater impact.

The following deliverables were chosen for the mapping exercise:

- **Deliverable 1**: A mapping of the key EORE administrative, coordination and operational bodies and processes in Ukraine.
- **Deliverable 2**: A mapping of the stakeholders, partners and actors involved in or that can support EORE in Ukraine.
- **Deliverable 3**: Analysis of the humanitarian context in Ukraine as it relates to EORE and recommendations for improving the effectiveness of the EORE response.

It is important to note that the mapping was not an evaluation of the EORE sector in Ukraine. Its purpose was to gain an understanding of the EORE sector at the time of the exercise and to propose ways forward that are adapted to the humanitarian context.

Methodology

The mapping was undertaken using a mix of qualitative research methods. A total of 37 documents were used. These comprised publications, articles, standards, surveys, guidelines, presentations and individual images, including from EORE materials and social media. Key EORE data, including on accidents involving explosive ordnance were also reviewed. In addition, 26 semi-structured key informant interviews were conducted, both in person and remotely. The key informants were from administrative, coordination and operational bodies and a mix of international and Ukrainian organisations. The findings of the mapping exercise are presented below.

[3] International Mine Action Standard (IMAS) 12.10 on EORE.

FINDINGS

Deliverable 1

Main actors

The mapping exercise identified the following major actors[4] in the EORE architecture in Ukraine. At the national level, the main actors were:

The secretariat of the national mine action authority: The national mine action authority was reported by most respondents as the de jure national focus for mine action activities, including EORE. All accredited operators are expected to report to the national mine action authority. In addition, it is actively involved in advocacy efforts to promote EORE and contributes to the development of the mine action strategy. It provides input related to EORE within the country and oversees the development and progress of the EORE sector.

The Centre for Humanitarian Demining (CHD): Some respondents reported that the CHD was the new national focal point for mine action. The relationships between the CHD, the national mine action authority and other national bodies were unclear to some of the respondents.

Certification entities: There are three entities that certify and provide quality assurance of mine action organisations, including of EORE activities. These are the mine action centre in Chernihiv, the Military Engineering School in Kam'ianets-Podilskyi and the Humanitarian Demining Centre of the State Emergency Service of Ukraine (SESU) in Merefa.[5] These entities do not all fall under the same ministry. They are expected to provide direction to certified EORE operators in several ways, namely through initial certification of the operators, allocation of geographical areas of responsibility and quality assurance visits.

SESU: SESU has an extensive network across Ukraine and is directly responsible for implementing EORE, especially in liberated areas and along front lines where other certified operators may not be able to go owing to government restrictions. EORE is conducted by personnel who have received training either from the SESU's interregional training centre or from other mine action partners.

Oblast authorities: Oblast authorities have mainly a coordination function, but some respondents reported being tasked by them.

National and international operators: Numerous organisations in Ukraine implement EORE activities. These include both mine action organisations and organisations with wider-ranging humanitarian and development mandates. Organisations that conduct EORE in Ukraine may be certified or not. In addition, there are certain ministries that develop EORE materials and implement EORE activities. These include the Ministry of Culture and Information Policy, through its Centre for Strategic Communication and Information Security, which produces EORE media materials that are distributed through oblast authorities.

Mine Action Area of Responsibility: This body, chaired by the United Nations Development Programme, deals with all pillars of mine action, including EORE.

EORE Working Group: This working group is considered a forum for the discussion of ideas and challenges related to EORE. Both international and national actors participate in the Working Group, which is chaired by UNICEF.

[4] This does not mean that these nine actors are the only ones, but they are the ones that were mentioned most frequently by respondents.
[5] At the time of publication, the Centre was moving to Vinnytsia.

Main issues raised during the interviews

In discussions about the EORE architecture, respondents placed particular emphasis on certification, quality management, planning and coordination.

Certification and quality management

Certification of all operators is required under the national mine action law. Some respondents, however, said that the certification process was too complicated for their organisations and focused more on administrative issues than on the content and quality of the EORE delivered. This complexity was reported to have caused delays for organisations seeking certification, despite the urgent need for EORE in Ukraine. For example, one respondent mentioned that the certification process had involved the submission of several rounds of paperwork and the hiring of additional, non-operational staff. It was also said, however, that some organisations had been insufficiently prepared for the certification process, which had led to delays. Another barrier to certification was the price of the national mine action standards, which cost 90 euros. This sum was beyond the means of smaller organisations that might not have the financial or human resources needed to undertake the certification process.[6] Some representatives reported that, as their organisations were not certified, they did not have the same access to training or funding as other, larger organisations. They were caught in a vicious circle: denied access to resources, they could not complete the certification process, which in turn meant that they did not have access to resources. Certification was seen by some respondents as a resource-intensive process that not all organisations could afford to undertake.

There were varying opinions with regard to the length of time that it took to become certified in EORE in Ukraine, with reports ranging from two and half months to one year. The specific requirements for certification can be found online, but some respondents reported that they were not clear enough. It was further reported that the process focused largely on face-to-face EORE and on the certification of teams that undertook such interventions. This creates some complications in an environment like Ukraine, where mass and social media are used extensively, as there is no clear certification process for this type of EORE delivery.

Regular quality assurance and quality control is necessary after certification. The mine action centres are reportedly responsible for ensuring compliance with the national mine action standards, and it was stated that there should be at least one quality-assurance visit per year to each certified mine action actor. It does not appear, however, that regular quality assurance or quality control is conducted after certification; some respondents said that they had never been monitored since the certification of their organisations. There appears to be a need for more resources, or the reallocation of resources, to enable the conduct of the EORE quality assurance and quality control required.

Planning and coordination

There are several coordination and collaboration mechanisms in Ukraine, such as the Mine Action Area of Responsibility and the EORE Working Group. Both entities hold regular meetings that are open to and attended by national and international actors and the Ukrainian authorities. As mentioned above, the Mine Action Area of Responsibility covers all the pillars of mine action, while the EORE Working Group focuses specifically on EORE. They are not the country's official planning and coordination bodies, but rather support the coordination and collaboration of activities. The Ukrainian authorities sometimes participate in the Mine Action Area of Responsibility and the EORE Working Group to share information on the most vulnerable regions and population groups and on incidents involving explosive ordnance.

It is the national mine action authority and the mine action centres that were reported to be involved in the planning and coordination of EORE. Meanwhile, each mine action centre is responsible for coordinating the mine action operators working within its region. It was reported that mine action centres coordinate all the certified mine action operators using annual and weekly plans. However, it was also reported that there was no large-scale prioritisation process for coordination, but that operators were often requested to carry out sessions in locations that experienced a high number of accidents.

[6] It is to be noted that, between the writing of the present mapping report and its publication, the national mine action standards became available online for free in the Ukrainian language.

It appears, however, that, although the mine action centres make suggestions as to where EORE could be undertaken, it is not compulsory to follow their suggestions. The reality is that EORE operators task themselves and submit workplans to the relevant coordination body to inform it of their areas of operation. Implementing organisations have different approaches to deciding where to work and, in the past, this had apparently led to overlaps and the duplication of activities. Moreover, other organisations that implemented EORE as part of a larger programme undertook EORE only in the locations in which they conducted other activities. These were largely organisations that were not certified and thus were not subject to any official tasking or did not report their areas of activities through any formal mine action system. Similarly, coordination between SESU and other mine action operators may be challenging as SESU does not officially receive information on the organisations active in each area. The information is shared with SESU sporadically if it has interaction and exchange with other organisations. There is no common dashboard that allows SESU to see which organisations are working where.

Coordination efforts are further complicated by the use of mass and social media to disseminate EORE messages. While there are multiple advantages to using mass and social media in contexts such as Ukraine, there is also the risk of oversaturation, which leads to EORE messages being lost among all the other messages being shared. Moreover, there are multiple versions of the same platforms being used by different organisations in Ukraine when it could be more efficient to work jointly and share platforms.

In terms of in-person EORE, one respondent reported a study that suggested that participants of EORE sessions complained of being overwhelmed by too many messages. This was in part owing to a lack of coordination. To resolve issues of overlap of activities, coordination is done bilaterally where possible. It seems, however, that, although collaboration among certified organisations may be relatively easy, the same cannot be said for collaboration between certified and non-certified organisations as they do not coordinate bilaterally as much.

Overall, there was consensus that coordination of EORE activities needs to be improved.

Deliverable 2

EORE operators

The main providers of EORE are national and international NGOs. In addition to the NGOs, some government entities also conduct EORE. SESU is seen as a main provider of EORE in the country. They have an extensive network across Ukraine and implement's EORE in all oblasts, including along the front line. Many respondents mentioned that SESU was a recognised and respected entity in Ukraine, which increased the effectiveness of its messaging. Owing to the diverse activities and operations of SESU, however, the service often had limited availability in the areas that needed EORE the most.

In-person and online EORE delivery

EORE sessions in Ukraine include adult- and child-focused sessions, and dedicated sessions and training for humanitarian and development workers, first responders, community focal points and farmers. EORE messages are delivered both in-person and online. The information conveyed includes traditional EORE messages, such as ‘do not touch’, ‘do not approach’, ‘report’, and messages aimed at behaviour change and conflict preparedness and protection. There is even a guidance document on messaging aimed at conflict preparedness and protection developed with a view to aligning such messaging in Ukraine.

As noted above, one of the key features of EORE in Ukraine is the extensive use of digital media. This includes the delivery of EORE sessions using online, social media and e-learning platforms. One organisation has also developed an application that allows users to take photos, record GPS coordinates and report the presence of explosive ordnance, while another organisation uses a QR code to take the public directly to the SESU WhatsApp group for the reporting of explosive ordnance. Although digital EORE is an effective means of reaching a large number of people, and may reach people that are unable to benefit from in-person EORE sessions, some respondents expressed the concern that digital EORE campaigns were too generic.

On the social media sites researched, some pages showed unsafe behaviour being promoted and given a hero-like status. This is dangerous and may contribute to replication of unsafe behaviour by others. For example, in one YouTube video, a man carrying an item of explosive ordnance off a road and into the forest is hailed as a 'hero' and a 'real man'. As well-intentioned as his act may have been, it is counterproductive to the goals of EORE as it may promote unsafe behaviour.

For many of the national NGOs, EORE is seamlessly integrated into their broader humanitarian activities that aim to enhance community resilience during times of conflict. This has advantages, as each NGO can play to its strengths when delivering EORE. For example, it was found that one organisation focused on its expertise in social and behaviour change communication, while other organisations used their expertise in education and training. However, organisations tended to concentrate their efforts in areas where they had projects under way already, which were not necessarily the areas in priority need of EORE.

Team composition

In Ukraine, EORE organisations conduct EORE with dedicated EORE teams or in combined teams that are also conducting other activities. All respondents reported teams composed of both sexes, but there was also the mention of difficulties in hiring men and women. The difficulty in hiring men was related to conscription for the war effort, whereas, for women, the difficulty related to a misunderstanding that non-technical survey and EORE activities involved physical engagement with explosive ordnance and entry into areas contaminated with explosive ordnance.

Data collection

Ukraine has an IMSMA that contains data that could inform EORE work, such as data, disaggregated by sex and age, on victims, accidents, contamination and the EORE activities implemented.

Some respondents also reported that they collected data disaggregated by disability, although this was less common than the collection of data disaggregated by sex and age. Only one respondent reported referring people with disabilities for additional support.

Deliverable 3

Groups most at risk from explosive ordnance

It is clear that, in a context of active conflict such as that experienced by Ukraine, it is difficult to identify a group that is most at risk. Respondents proposed a wide range of specific groups that were particularly at risk, including farmers, first responders, infrastructure repair workers, the displaced, returnees, those living close to the front line and children. In relation to children, there was some suggestion that schools might receive multiple EORE messages and materials and that children who did not attend school were missing out on EORE sessions.

It was generally understood by all respondents, however, that men were more at risk than women, which is reflected in the available casualty data. Nevertheless, men were seen as difficult to reach for EORE owing to the conscription or because they are away at work when EORE teams organized the sessions. Some respondents reported that they were constrained by Ukrainian labour laws to conduct their EORE sessions during those hours. Digital EORE and the use of mass media were offered as potential solutions for addressing this gap, along with the delivery of EORE sessions in workplaces.

Another group seen as being left out of EORE sessions were people living in areas close to the front line. This was attributed to restrictions on face-to-face EORE sessions within the 20kilometre buffer zone. That said, some organisations that did have access to the buffer zone reported distributing information on explosive ordnance safety alongside essential humanitarian supplies. In addition, it was reported that, albeit on a limited scale and not

very frequently, representatives of the civil–military cooperation shared EORE messages at checkpoints. Several respondents said that they would like to see access to the buffer zone for EORE teams especially given that EORE could be considered a life-saving activity and that other humanitarian organisations, such as those providing food and other essential items, were allowed to work there. The people living in the buffer zone and the occupied territories were widely recognised as being the group most left out of EORE activities.

Coordination

The coordination of EORE activities appears to be a challenge in Ukraine. As mentioned previously, coordination is complicated by the presence of both certified and non-certified organisations. Uncertified organisations are often not included in coordination mechanisms either formal or informal. It was reported that non-certified organisations lacked a clear understanding of which organisations were active in which locations and did not have access to the maps in the IMSMA. Although duplication was reported to occur, both among certified organisations and between non-certified and certified organisations, the duplication was reported to be less of an issue between certified organisations as they could coordinate bilaterally. Certified and non-certified organisations, however, were much less likely to be in contact.

Some organisations were critical of the current coordination mechanisms, calling them ineffective. Internationally led working and coordination groups were sometimes seen as being exclusively for international actors. There also appeared to be a division between international and national actors, with each group expressing concerns about the other of being unwilling to coordinate and / or of providing incorrect or ineffective messaging. These sentiments underscore the need for improved communication and collaboration among international and national organisations as, ultimately, all of them are working towards the same goal.

During the interviews, it was suggested that a general dashboard, table or list would enable improved coordination. It was understood that there was an IMSMA dashboard on EORE activities showing general statistics on the number of sessions and the number of beneficiaries, disaggregated by age and sex, with the opportunity to filter by region, operator and date. That dashboard, however, did not include data from non-certified organisations.

Finally, there is a wealth of EORE materials in Ukraine. This includes printed materials, such as posters, pamphlets and comic books, e-learning courses and materials adapted for social media. It was suggested by a few respondents that EORE operators should share their materials. The EORE Working Group has a shared drive of EORE materials, although it is not clear how up to date or comprehensive those materials are.

Behaviour change

EORE activities seek to promote behavioural change so that populations affected by explosive ordnance adopt safer behaviour. As such, the use of social and behaviour change techniques and messages is fundamental in EORE interventions. In Ukraine, behaviour change techniques are reportedly applied to EORE in the following ways: through emphasis of the importance of sharing messages about safer behaviour, by the tailoring of messages to specific at-risk groups and by addressing barriers to and enablers of behaviour change. Some respondents also reported that their organisations based their EORE activities on SBCC theories and models and employed pedagogical methodologies and adult-learning techniques to enhance the effectiveness of their activities. In general, it seemed that understanding of the principles of social and behaviour change communication was better among the organisations with marketing and communication backgrounds. Although all respondents reported delivering behaviour change messaging, all of them also said that, in general, EORE messages focused too much on the recognition of explosive ordnance.

There is a particular need in Ukraine for messaging based on behaviour change methodologies. Portrayal of unsafe behaviour on the internet, hailed as heroic and brave, is common. Indeed, a 2023 knowledge, attitude, behaviour and practice survey reported that, during focus group discussions, the concept of bravery was mentioned on numerous occasions. Indeed, in 2022, the Government of Ukraine rebranded its internal and external communications to centre on the bravery of the Ukrainian people. While the promotion of cultural values of courage, fortitude and steadfastness in the face of adversity is positive, it may result in Ukrainian citizens,

especially men, taking unnecessary risks when it comes to explosive ordnance[7]. There is, however, an opportunity for EORE providers to use bravery and associated cultural values to promote safer behaviour through adapted messaging. The conditions for the adaptation and targeting of EORE messaging are present in Ukraine and should be used. Critical analysis of the data in the Ukrainian IMSMA database can be combined with the use of behaviour change methodologies.

It was reported that the biggest change of behaviour would come if people were provided with alternative sources of livelihood. This is supported by the aforementioned 2023 knowledge, attitude, behaviour and practice survey, which identified a person's occupation as a significant driver of risk-taking behaviour. The survey found that 50.1 per cent of the retired individuals interviewed, 37.6 per cent of the unemployed respondents and 36.4 per cent of those in farming / agriculture exhibited risk-taking behaviour.[8] Currently, a project implemented in Kharkiv and Mykolaiv Oblasts by the Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations and the World Food Programme is helping rural families and small farmers return to self-sufficiency. The two UN organisations, in coordination with the Fondation suisse de déminage, the Government of Ukraine, food security and livelihood organisations and local authorities, are clearing agricultural land and returning it to productive use, preventing accidents caused by explosive ordnance and providing livelihood assistance.[9]

Measurement

There was consensus among respondents that existing approaches to measuring EORE activities in Ukraine did not focus on outcomes and, at best, measured only outputs. Representatives of EORE organisations reported that their output-level indicators included disaggregated data on the number of people reached, the number of EORE sessions held and the number of visits to a website. An increase in knowledge was mentioned as both an output and outcome. Although some respondents reported behaviour change as an outcome, most said that it was impossible to measure behaviour change, or that they were not sure how to measure it. Moreover, as outcome measurements tend to be a longer-term endeavour, most respondents reported that their organisations did not have enough durable funding to be able to undertake them. There was no report of an organisation having a specific theory of change for EORE, and several respondents said that they did not know what a theory of change was.

CONCLUSION

There is a clear need for EORE in Ukraine. Several respondents recognised that explosive ordnance contamination would be an issue facing Ukraine for generations to come, even if the fighting were to stop immediately. As such, it is imperative that EORE is funded and implemented for multiple generations to come in Ukraine.

Ukraine already has an established mine action sector that is led by the Government of Ukraine and supported internationally, including financially. Given the extent of the new contamination and the increase in EORE activities, effective management and coordination of the mine action sector are crucial. It appears that a clearer understanding of the EORE architecture in Ukraine may still be required. Indeed, within the Government of Ukraine, there are numerous entities that play a role in EORE, and there needs to be more clarity in terms of the roles, responsibilities and decision-making authority of those entities. Moreover, once roles and responsibilities have been attributed to entities, they need to be allocated sufficient resources, and, where necessary, specific training should be provided to empower personnel to carry out their tasks. For example, quality management was mentioned as being insufficient in Ukraine; increased resources for EORE quality management, accompanied by relevant training, would thus be beneficial.

[7] Grené, Marie, *KABP Survey Report: Ukraine, 2023,* Danish Refugee Council and Humanity and Inclusion, 2023, page 63.
[8] Grené, Marie, *KABP Survey Report: Ukraine, 2023,* Danish Refugee Council and Humanity and Inclusion, 2023, page 53.
[9] FAO and WFP, *FAO-WFP agricultural livelihoods and mine action in Ukraine*, 26 April 2024.

Given that international support to Ukraine for humanitarian mine action activities has increased since the full-scale invasion, the coordination of the multiple EORE operators in the country is necessary to ensure that resources are used efficiently. In Ukraine, it does not seem that there is a coherent coordination system in place, and duplication of efforts have been reported. Coordination of EORE activities is further complicated by the presence of non-certified EORE actors that are not formally part of any coordination system. Although the widespread use of digital EORE is highly commendable from a technical perspective in a context like Ukraine, it is challenging to coordinate, and several of the same type of digital platform, developed by different EORE providers, exist. Any divisions between international and national, certified and non-certified organisations and other EORE stakeholder needs to be removed, particularly when all of them are working towards the same humanitarian goal. It can only be beneficial if all coordinate their activities, including in terms of their areas of operation, materials and messages and the sharing of technical expertise in EORE, social and behaviour change, communications, education, training and other related skills.

One of many ways to ensure better quality and coordination of EORE is through certification and the application of the national mine action standards. Strides have already been made to clarify the certification process, but becoming certified remains a huge endeavour for smaller operators with fewer financial and human resources.

It should be noted that intentional / forced risk takers require more than just simple EORE messaging to change their behaviour. Partnerships with humanitarian and development actors that can provide alternative solutions to the intentional / forced risk-taking behaviour is one method that could help overcome this challenge. The application of social and behaviour change approaches to EORE would also help. Although, currently, most of the indicators used in Ukraine are at the output level, which is understandable given the context, outcome-level measurements could help determine the effectiveness of EORE approaches and should be encouraged and facilitated to enable the tracking of behaviour change.

It should be noted that the EORE sector in Ukraine is already highly developed. This is helped by the well-established IMSMA, the wealth of data available, well-designed EORE materials and the expertise that exists. The potential for more effective and efficient EORE is thus already present in country.

RECOMMENDATIONS

On the basis of the interviews and the document research conducted, the following recommendations have been developed with a view to contributing to more effective and efficient EORE operations in Ukraine. These recommendations are general rather than being directed at specific entities.

Improve coordination of EORE stakeholders and activities: It was recognised unanimously that coordination was both necessary and useful, but that the current set-up made coordination complicated and burdensome. As there were some very different views on the requirements for coordination, it is suggested that a workshop led by the Government of Ukraine and participated in by relevant stakeholders could be held to discuss how coordination should be improved. Subjects that could be addressed include access to the buffer zone for EORE teams, the integration or certification of non-certified EORE providers and the coordination of digital activities.

Make the certification process more accessible: To enable the certification of smaller organisations and ensure that all EORE providers are certified, a simplified certification process could be discussed, especially given the current humanitarian imperative of EORE. Another suggestion is a temporary EORE certification, whereby a simplified and rapid certification is provided for a short period, giving time for organisations to prepare their application for full certification.

Increase the integration of EORE messaging into the actions of other sectors: Current EORE activities focus largely on the identification of explosive ordnance and the sharing of messages on safer behaviour, but such an approach does not address the intentional / forced risk-taker groups. Coordination with other humanitarian and development actors to address specific issues that force people to engage in unsafe behaviour can enable EORE providers to reach additional risk-taking groups. Coordination with other humanitarian and development actors may also increase access to the buffer zone and to front lines if EORE providers team up with actors that do have access there.

Adopt more behaviour change strategies: In addition, it is suggested that more behaviour change techniques be used in EORE messaging. For example, a comprehensive analysis of the barriers to and enablers of behaviour change in Ukraine could be conducted and the messaging adapted on the basis of the results.

Improve the analysis of the data collected: There is a very good data set for EORE in Ukraine, but more analysis of those data could help efforts improve the overall effectiveness of EORE. For example, more emphasis on data analysis might reveal why men outnumber women in terms of casualties of explosive ordnance and enable EORE targeting and messaging to be improved. In addition, the finding that engagement with explosive ordnance is sometimes given hero status in Ukraine is potentially significant and might lead to a discussion on how best to modify messaging to counter this apparent mix of recklessness and misinformation.[10] Similarly, more detailed data analysis should enable stronger links to be forged between EORE and alternative livelihood programmes in order to limit the incidence of intentional risk-taking because of need. Analysis of data disaggregated by sex, age and disability could further be used to enhance planning, prioritysetting and potentially EORE materials to increase their impact on specific target groups.

Develop technical guidelines for EORE: Specific guidelines should be developed and shared with the EORE community with a view to further harmonising EORE across the sector. These could, for example, include specific guidelines on EORE messages and the development of EORE materials. A section of the Ukrainian national mine action standards already refers to EORE. It remains relatively generic, however, and may benefit from being updated, including as a way of providing greater technical clarity. It would also be useful for that section to be issued as a separate national mine action standard on EORE and made available free of charge.

Provide more capacity development and training opportunities for all interested stakeholders: There is clearly a lot of good EORE being done by highly motivated organisations. Nevertheless, there remains a need to regularise the unofficial status of the non-certified organisations that provide EORE. Many of the respondents said that they would welcome support, including in capacity development, that would enable them to become certified and benefit from a wider donor pool. There was also extensive interest in learning more about EORE management. A series of EORE management courses, covering topics such as the theory of change, budget management and proposal writing should be developed, opened to all interested stakeholders.

Furthermore, given the widespread use of social media depicting unsafe behaviour, EORE messaging training could be conducted with social media influencers, news journalists or other professionals who rely on social media, as a way of increasing the effectiveness of EORE messaging.

Organise workshops for the sharing of expertise: There is varied technical expertise in Ukraine, including in EORE, social and behaviour change, communication and adult and child education. A series of technical workshops could be organised, for all actors involved in EORE, to discuss different EORE methodologies based on specific areas of expertise grounded in evidence. Partnerships between organisations and individuals with different expertise should be envisaged.

Integrate the measurement of outcomes into EORE: Data collection in Ukraine is generally very good, but there is insufficient monitoring of the achievement of desired outcomes and impacts. The recent adoption of the Ukraine National Mine Action Strategy and Operational Plan is a good basis for discussions on the development of a specific theory of change for EORE or indicators and means of verification for the measurement of EORE outcomes. In the same vein, there could be further discussion on standardisation of the current ways of measuring activities and outputs, including the way in which beneficiaries are reported.

Ensure the sustainability of EORE: Contamination by explosive ordnance in Ukraine is unfortunately an intergenerational issue. The sustainability of EORE is therefore crucial. In a highly developed context such as Ukraine, there is a strong case to be made for national solutions. Efforts should therefore be made to prioritise local approaches to EORE, including enabling the certification of more national organisations and, as mentioned above, the provision of capacity development and training and the sharing of expertise. Direct collaboration with ministries, for example, with the Ministry of Health for victim referral or the Ministry of Education for the integration of EORE messages into the school curriculum, can ensure sustainability.

[10] To use the risk-taking terms coined by UNICEF.

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