

1. Mine/UXO problem in Tajikistan Government's response:

Tajikistan's landmines contamination arises from the following three different situations:

- Russian forces used landmines on the Tajik-Afghan Border during the period of 1992-1998 in order to protect the border and their border posts from extremist groups attempting to enter Tajikistan from Afghanistan.
- Uzbekistan forces mined Tajikistan's Western and Northern borders (primarily in the Sughd Region) during the period of 2000-2001 in order to protect the border from extremist groups and bandit formations attempting to enter Uzbekistan from Tajikistan. .
- The Central Region of the country was contaminated by landmines, submunition and other Explosive Remnants of War (ERW) during the 1992-1997 civil war.

Tajikistan accessioned to Ottawa Convention in 12 October 1999. 1 April 2000 Convention entered into the force.

In April 2002 in accordance to decision of Commission for the Implementation of International Humanitarian Law (CIIHL) has been created Special Working Group on Mine Action, which is by supporting of ICRC initiated the system on gathering information on mine accidents. By this activity actually started the establishment of Tajikistan Mine Action Programme.

In June 2003 the Swiss Foundation for Mine Action (FSD) invited to Tajikistan to conduct mine clearance operations. The agreement between Government and FSD was signed in 20 June 2003. Also, in 20 June 2003 signed agreement between Government and UNDP, in accordance to which was established TMAC as a Mine Action coordination body of the Government

2. Summary of land release policies, procedures and/or national standards implemented to date.

National MA Standards on Land Release are developed by TMAC and approved by CIIHL. One International (FSD), one National (Humanitarian demining unit of MoD) mine clearance agencies and Mine detection dog's Centre accredited by TMAC.

SOPs of Mine clearance agencies on Land release approved by TMAC

Developing Land release methods by Non-technical survey operations

Request for extension of the clearance deadline for the next 10 years is approved by state-parties.

3. Implementation of these policies, procedures and/or standards.

There are four approved Technical Survey and Clearance techniques used in Tajikistan, to implement these different phases of mine clearance, they include the following (Only first three methods are currently governed by NMAS. NMAS are currently being developed for the remaining methods):

○ **Manual Clearance (Full Excavation Prod System - FEPS):** The FEPS method has been successfully used in Tajikistan for the past four years. This method of clearance has proven to work extremely well as most mines are found very close to each other or when detector beeps steady. This method is only effective in areas of relatively soft soil, high-density mine and metal contamination. The only disadvantage of this method is its slow clearance pace.

FEPS has been used:

- In areas of high metal contamination or soil of a high metal content.
- In areas with a suspected presence of non metallic mines.
- In soft soil conditions where raking is not permitted due to the possible presence of directional or fragmentation mines.

Full excavation involves the use of a digging tool to excavate to the required clearance depth, working down the clearance lane. Work in the clearance lane proceeds in stages determined by the width of the tool. There is no requirement for an overlap in the excavation; however an overlap into adjacent unexcavated lanes is required for the preliminary inspection, tripwire detection drill and the vegetation cutting drill (if these are required).

During full excavation, water may be used to soften the soil if the ground is too hard.

Manual Clearance (Detector): This method is used as a main method of demining during clearance operations. Manual detector clearance requires greater equipment investment, provides less production and requires more training and maintenance. Still, it forms an important method where the FEPS method is not seen as safe or efficient. Any Manual Clearance Team in Tajikistan is trained to employ both methods.

Mine Detection Dogs (Technical Survey): To increase the pace of releasing land, mine detection dogs were introduced into operations in Tajikistan in 2006 and have successfully worked in most areas. They have been used in the technical survey process in the different terrain.

Non-standard mechanical support (Technical Survey): This method, approved by TMAC has been successfully used only once during mine clearance operations in Tajik-Afghan border in Panj district. For this method a bulldozer, provided by local authority and armoured by FSD operation staff, has been used. The armoured bulldozer has been used for clearance of water channel from dirt and mud and to prepare 6 X 120 meter line along the channel for manual demining and MDD. This method approved by TMAC on the operational plan, but not entered into NMAS. NMAS are currently being developed for this method.

New methods used during the technical survey: The new method of technical survey is used depending on the situation, terrain, type of soil and mines, according to the task. The method is mainly used if the type of mines laid in the area are known. It is effective for mined areas with PFM-1(S) or POMZ-2(M) type mines. PFM type mines are scatterable mines and they are laid abundantly on the land, which makes their detection easy. POMZ type mines placed on the surface, which makes them visible during a review of the area.

According to the new method the manual technical survey team or the MDD team clears the perimeter of the mined area to a width of 2m. Then part of the area is divided into 5 boxes (10 X 10) and selectively, 3 of them are cleared. If there are no mines found, the other 2 leftover boxes are reduced without checking. The method is allowed to accelerate the technical survey activities. This method is used under the strict control of the team leaders, supervisors and QA team from TMAC. This method also approved by TMAC and NMAS are currently being developed.

4. Successes and best practices

- More than 45 km² cancelled as a safe by Non-technical survey operations
- More than 1,9 km² cleared by manual clearance operations
- More than 1,4 km² reduced by Mine detection dogs
- More than 0,75 km² reduced by technical survey operations
- More than 0,01 km² reduced by non-standard mechanical operations

Remaining land for clearance 11 km²

5. Failures and/or problems

- **Only manual demining employed:** During the first 3 years, TMAC's mine action operators mainly used manual mine clearance with a small number of demining teams. Tajikistan began to deploy Mine Detecting Dogs in 2006.
- **Difficult areas:** Tajikistan is highly mountainous country; many of its SHAs are located in hard to reach areas. This has been a challenge for clearance work.
- **Weather:** Extreme weather conditions are another challenge to clearance operations. Many SHAs are accessible only 3-4 months a year (i.e. only during summer period).
- **Financing:** Insufficient funds for the programme have presented operational challenges. On several occasions, funds have been provided late in the year resulting in the delay of operations and leaving a short work window.
- **Need for Demining Machines:** If available, this surely would have increased the speed of demining activities as some areas are more suitable for mechanical clearance.
- **Minefield records:** The Russian Military left minefield records of the minefield on the border with Afghanistan but these have proven to be dangerously inaccurate. Border areas that were difficult to access were mined using cluster bombs that spread sub munitions widely.
- **Border dispute with Uzbekistan:** As of present Uzbekistan is not cooperating with the Tajikistan counterpart on the issue of border mine-clearance, the maps of the mine fields and the information on cleared areas are not submitted and as a result it is not possible to inform the local population about the risk and land that has been cleared for their use. Significantly, only 85 percent of the border line mentioned above has been defined by the present international legal order. These mine fields are the most noteworthy cause of concern. Numerous people have suffered mine accidents in these areas.

6. Data on land release

Tajikistan Mine Action Centre										
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	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	Total	%	ACTUALLY	%
Beginning SHA	49,637,637	49,566,754	49,437,598	49,103,851	30,787,273	9,041,179			60,193,764	100.00%
Release by Non-technical survey										
	-	-	-	17,582,600	23,477,112	3,994,750	45,054,462	91.70%	45,054,462	74.85%
Release by Technical survey										
	-	-	-	365,689	669,602	926,594	1,961,885	3.99%	1,961,885	3.26%
Release by Clearance										
	70,883	129,156	333,747	368,289	368,206	847,278	2,117,559	4.31%	2,117,559	3.52%
Total Land Released	70,883	129,156	333,747	18,316,578	24,514,920	5,768,622	49,133,906	100.00%	49,133,906	
									503,731	0.84%
New SHA areas found										
	-	-	-	-	2,768,826	7,787,301	10,556,127		10,556,127	17.54%
Ending SHA	49,566,754	49,437,598	49,103,851	30,787,273	9,041,179	11,059,858			11,059,858	