

**ARTICLE 4 DEADLINE: 1 MARCH 2026**  
ON TRACK TO MEET DEADLINE: UNCLEAR

### KEY DATA

#### CLUSTER MUNITION CONTAMINATION: LIGHT

NATIONAL ESTIMATE

**10** km<sup>2</sup>

SUBMUNITION  
CLEARANCE IN 2022

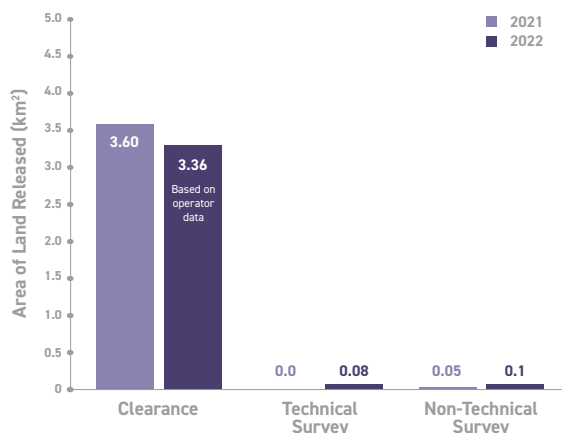
**3.36** km<sup>2</sup>

SUBMUNITIONS  
DESTROYED IN 2022

**240**

(INCLUDING 77 DESTROYED  
IN SPOT TASKS)

### LAND RELEASE OUTPUT



## KEY DEVELOPMENTS

Mine action in Afghanistan continued to experience upheavals which persisted into 2023 as the Directorate of Mine Action Coordination (DMAC) sought to maintain its role managing and coordinating the sector in the face of sanctions and a loss of funding that forced it to stand down all but a handful of staff. The United Nations Mine Action Service (UNMAS) provided interim coordination, initially through the UN Humanitarian Mine Action Coordination for Afghanistan (UNHMACCA). This shut down in April 2022 over disagreements with DMAC on its role. A Liaison Office supported by UNMAS opened in June but closed again in November after exhausting available funding. It received new funding and resumed work in January 2023 but closed in April 2023 after the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan (IEA)

required it to collocate with DMAC, an arrangement that was not permitted under international sanctions against the IEA.

DMAC obtained government funding to employ some information management staff and took back management of the national mine action database in February 2023 and submitted a Convention on Cluster Munitions (CCM) Article 7 report at the end of May 2023. UNMAS decided in November 2022 that the Voluntary Trust Fund (VTF) would no longer support funding for operations which has principally benefitted national implementing partners (IPs) and would only fund coordination. As a result of declining international funding, Mine Action Programme of Afghanistan (MAPA) IPs have stood down hundreds of deminers in 2023.

## RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ACTION

- In order to avert a collapse in clearance of cluster munition remnants (CMR) and other explosive hazards, the Afghan government and DMAC should work constructively with UNMAS on creating a mechanism for it to deliver support to the national mine action programme, within the limits imposed by international donors.
- The IEA and DMAC should ensure participation of women in mine action.
- UNMAS should restore VTF funding for operations at least pending agreement among donors on alternative means of supporting mine action.
- Afghanistan should accelerate survey of areas that were previously inaccessible due to insecurity to establish a definitive baseline estimate of remaining CMR contamination.

- DMAC should update its programme of work for fulfilling its CCM Article 4 obligations and completing clearance of remaining contamination.
- DMAC should ensure its Article 7 reports contain comprehensive data on the outstanding level of contamination, disaggregated by province.

## ASSESSMENT OF NATIONAL PROGRAMME PERFORMANCE

Criterion	Score (2022)	Score (2021)	Performance Commentary
<b>UNDERSTANDING OF CMR CONTAMINATION</b> (20% of overall score)	8	8	Afghanistan has a small amount of known CMR contamination but continues to identify significant previously unrecorded cluster munition-contaminated areas. The change of government in 2021 has opened up areas previously inaccessible due to insecurity raising the possibility operators will find more contamination. Operators also encounter scattered "legacy" submunitions in the course of other tasks.
<b>NATIONAL OWNERSHIP AND PROGRAMME MANAGEMENT</b> (10% of overall score)	4	4	The MAPA is nationally managed but heavily dependent on international funding and international sanctions since the August 2021 Taliban takeover left DMAC with a skeleton team unable to discharge its former management and coordination functions. Negative donor reaction to Taliban policies, particularly towards women, exacerbated the problem. The IEA provided limited funding to support DMAC in 2022 but it still needed substantial management and technical support from UNMAS and in 2023 imposed conditions that exacerbated the challenges for the MAPA by causing the shut-down of a joint liaison office.
<b>GENDER AND DIVERSITY</b> (10% of overall score)	3	5	Draconian Taliban policies towards employment of women have eclipsed DMAC's pre-2021 commitment to mainstreaming gender in mine action which featured in the 2016–20 strategic plan and DMAC's initial flexibility on the issue. IPs continued to employ some female staff working from home and in some locations where local authorities agreed women continued to visit communities for risk education on an ad hoc basis.
<b>INFORMATION MANAGEMENT AND REPORTING</b> (10% of overall score)	4	4	Information management suffered disruption after the change of government. DMAC has an Information Management System for Mine Action (IMSMA) database but lost most of its information management personnel after the end to international funding. IPs, which had continued to report operating results to DMAC, largely halted doing so after August. UN-HMACCA resumed data processing early in 2022 but this was terminated at the end of March. DMAC subsequently agreed that a liaison office set up with UNMAS would manage the IMSMA database but it closed in November 2022 due to lack of funding. The liaison office resumed work in January 2023 but DMAC did not permit it to resume data processing, which remained suspended until February 2023 when DMAC restarted information management under its direct supervision and the Liaison Office closed again in March. DMAC submitted a CCM Article 7 report in May 2023.
<b>PLANNING AND TASKING</b> (10% of overall score)	3	4	Mine action sector planning was disrupted by the change of regime, international sanctions, and post-regime-change discord between DMAC and UNMAS. Afghanistan never had a strategic plan for cluster munition clearance but a CCM Article 4 deadline extension request submitted in August 2021 before the Taliban took over set timelines for clearance of all remaining CMR hazardous areas by 2026. The additional time requested appeared more than sufficient for the tackling the contamination but implementation remains dependent on international donor support, which dropped after the Taliban takeover.
<b>LAND RELEASE SYSTEM</b> (20% of overall score)	6	6	The MAPA has national mine action standards in Dari and English that were previously subject to regular review. International experts believe the Afghanistan Mine Action Standards (AMAS) need comprehensive updating. Upheavals in DMAC after August 2021 disrupted its quality management, which has continued but only sporadically.
<b>LAND RELEASE OUTPUTS AND ARTICLE 4 COMPLIANCE</b> (20% of overall score)	7	7	Regime change in August 2021 and international sanctions did not halt CMR clearance operations in 2022 but the downturn in international donor support threatens to bring it close to a standstill in 2023. DAFA continued CMR clearance in 2022 at close to the same level as in 2023 but lacked funding to sustain operations in 2023.
<b>Average Score</b>	<b>5.6</b>	<b>5.9</b>	<b>Overall Programme Performance: AVERAGE</b>

# CLUSTER MUNITION SURVEY AND CLEARANCE CAPACITY

## MANAGEMENT

- Afghanistan National Disaster Management Authority (ANDMA)
- Directorate of Mine Action Coordination (DMAC)

## NATIONAL OPERATORS

- Afghan Technical Consultants (ATC)
- Agency for Rehabilitation and Energy Conservation in Afghanistan (AREA)
- Demining Agency for Afghanistan (DAFA)
- Mine Clearance Planning Agency (MCPA)
- Mine Detection and Dog Centre (MDC)
- Organisation for Mine Clearance and Afghan Rehabilitation (OMAR)

## INTERNATIONAL OPERATORS

- Danish Refugee Council Humanitarian Disarmament and Peacebuilding sector (formerly known as Danish Demining Group (DRC))
- The HALO Trust (HALO)
- FSD

## OTHER ACTORS

- United Nations Mine Action Service (UNMAS)
- Norwegian People's Aid (NPA)

## UNDERSTANDING OF CMR CONTAMINATION

Afghanistan has limited CMR contamination compared with its much greater challenge from landmines and other explosive remnants of war (ERW) but persistent discoveries of previously unrecorded hazardous areas in recent years resulted in fluctuating estimates of the extent of CMR contamination.

Afghanistan informed the CCM intersessional meetings in May 2022 that contamination amounted to 16 hazardous areas affecting 9.9km<sup>2</sup>.<sup>1</sup> The Article 7 report submitted by DMAC at the end of May 2023 referred to “almost 10km<sup>2</sup>” of CMR, but this appears not to take into account previously unknown cluster munition-contaminated areas discovered in 2022. DMAC did not provide details or a breakdown by province but the total was marginally less than the estimated contamination at the end of 2021 (see Table 1).<sup>2</sup>

Afghanistan was unable to produce a definitive assessment of its CMR challenge in a period of conflict which denied IPs access to affected districts. New discoveries of previously unrecorded hazardous areas have seen estimates of contamination rise from 4.18km<sup>2</sup> at the end of 2018 to 7.54km<sup>2</sup> at the end of 2020. In 2021, Quick Response Teams identified another 11 previously unrecorded confirmed hazardous areas (CHAs) totalling 5.66km<sup>2</sup>, mainly in a district of Paktya province that had not been surveyed because of insecurity, raising the estimate of contamination to 10km<sup>2</sup> as at the end of 2021 (see Table 1).<sup>4</sup> Improved security and access in the provinces since the Taliban takeover in August 2021 raise the likelihood of further CMR hazard discoveries. In 2022, DMAC reported discovery of an additional 12 CHAs with a total area of 8.1km<sup>2</sup> (see Table 2).<sup>5</sup>

**Table 1: Cluster munition-contaminated area (at end 2021)<sup>3</sup>**

Province	CHAs	Area (m <sup>2</sup> )
Bamyan	2	258,887
Nangarhar	5	4,233,907
Paktya	10	5,522,391
Samangan	2	11,715
<b>Totals</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>10,026,900</b>

**Table 2: Cluster munition-contaminated area newly recorded in 2022<sup>6</sup>**

Province	CHAs	Area (m <sup>2</sup> )
Bamyan	2	1,097,364
Paktya	9	6,983,484
Samangan	1	3,864
<b>Totals</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>8,084,712</b>

1 Statement of Afghanistan, CCM Intersessional meetings, Geneva, 16 May 2022.

2 Article 7 Report (covering 2022), Form F, #10.

3 Email from Olivier Demars, Information Management Advisor, UNMAS, 24 April 2022.

4 Email from Mohammad Akbar Oriakhil, Head of Planning and Programme, DMAC, 11 April 2021. CHAs identified in 2021 included seven in Paktya covering 5.26km<sup>2</sup>, two in Bamyan affecting 0.39km<sup>2</sup>, and two in Samangan affecting 0.01km<sup>2</sup>. 2021 Article 4 deadline Extension Request, p. 10.

5 Email from Abdul Habib Rahimi, Chief of Operations and Deputy Director, DMAC, 11 June 2023. The newly recorded hazardous areas exceeded the amount of land released suggesting total CMR contamination increased in 2022.

6 Email from Abdul Habib Rahimi, DMAC, 11 June 2023.

## OTHER EXPLOSIVE REMNANTS OF WAR AND LANDMINES

CMR make up only a small part of Afghanistan's extensive explosive ordnance contamination. This includes 387km<sup>2</sup> identified as mined area<sup>7</sup> and a wide range of ERW. Afghanistan had extensive contamination by unexploded ordnance (UXO) on 39 former North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) firing ranges which in early 2022 was estimated to cover 681km<sup>2</sup>.<sup>8</sup> Most explosive ordnance casualties in Afghanistan in 2022 were reportedly caused by UXO.<sup>9</sup>

## NATIONAL OWNERSHIP AND PROGRAMME MANAGEMENT

The Taliban takeover of Afghanistan's government in August 2021 brought little formal change to the Mine Action Programme of Afghanistan (MAPA) management structure but disrupted its ability to function. The Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan (IEA) retained Afghanistan's National Disaster Management Authority in the role of a mine action authority setting policy while DMAC was responsible for managing and coordinating operations, information management, and quality management (QM). The only change resulting from the change of government was the director appointed by the IEA to run it. All other staff were previously employed by DMAC.<sup>10</sup> The lack of international recognition of the IEA and financial sanctions imposed by Western governments left DMAC acutely short of funding and staff and imposed severe constraints on the role of UNMAS.

DMAC had completed the transition from being a project of UNMAS to national management in June 2018. From its headquarters in Kabul and seven regional offices, DMAC coordinated the work of national and international implementing partners, prepared strategic plans and annual workplans, set priorities and standards, accredited operators, conducted quality assurance (QA), managed the mine action database, and liaised with international donors.<sup>11</sup> However, DMAC remained almost entirely dependent on international financing. By 2021, the Government of Afghanistan paid salaries of only 15 of DMAC's 155 staff, the rest were paid by UNMAS and ITF Enhancing Human Security.<sup>12</sup> After August 2021, international sanctions imposed on the IEA halted UNMAS support for DMAC, and DMAC staff on internationally funded salaries transferred to UNMAS. In June 2022, DMAC's active staff consisted of the director and 15 other staff, including the heads of planning and operations and an information management officer.<sup>13</sup>

DMAC's director maintained close contact with IPs and engaged proactively to facilitate MAPA operations, intervening to resolve occasional difficulties between IPs and local authorities or to facilitate equipment imports, but DMAC acknowledged it lacked capacity to conduct previous levels of coordination and management. DMAC's regional offices closed and quality management staff were able to conduct only sporadic visits to IP operating sites to accredit teams

and mechanical assets. IPs continued to submit progress reports to DMAC but the Directorate lacked capacity to upload them into the database.<sup>14</sup>

To maintain some continuity in MAPA operations, DMAC and UNMAS reached agreement on setting up an emergency coordination mechanism independent of the government and identified from November 2021 as the UN Humanitarian Mine Action Coordination Centre for Afghanistan (UN-HMACCA). The mechanism was agreed as a "temporary project" pending international recognition of the IEA. DMAC would remain responsible for mine action sector governance, strategy, and accreditation, and international treaty compliance. UN-HMACCA would take on planning, prioritisation and land release, data collection and information management, accreditation, training, and public relations, including resource mobilisation.<sup>15</sup> The formula proved unacceptable to DMAC, and UN-HMACCA was terminated at the end of March 2022, ending the employment of 118 national staff.<sup>16</sup>

In June 2022, DMAC and UNMAS agreed on the creation of a Liaison Office providing coordination for the MAPA, tasking for IPs, external quality management for IPs, and managing the Information Management System for Mine Action (IMSMA) database. The Liaison Office suspended operations in November 2022 because of a shortage of funding. UNMAS obtained international funding for the Liaison Office for 2023 and resumed operations in January 2023. In February 2023, DMAC took back responsibility for information management and running the IMSMA database and suspended the Liaison Office with effect from the start of April.<sup>17</sup> A directive subsequently issued by the Office of the Prime Minister required DMAC and the Liaison Office to work from the same building. Donor restrictions did not allow UNMAS to comply, causing the Liaison Office to close.<sup>18</sup>

UNMAS decided in November 2022 that it would cease providing funding through the VTF for operations from 1 April 2023 and VTF funding would only support coordination. IPs criticised the decision which they said would severely impact national demining organisations that lacked direct contact with international donors. It added to the financial pressures resulting from the downturn in donor support and which has already led to significant deminer lay-offs.<sup>19</sup>

7 Email from Olivier Demars, UNMAS, 24 April 2022.

8 UNMAS, "Humanitarian Mine Action in Afghanistan", 10 February 2022.

9 Email from Mohammad Wakil Jamshidi, Deputy Programme Manager and Chief of Operations, UNMAS, 12 July 2023.

10 Interview with Qari Nooruddin Rustamkhail, Director, DMAC, 4 June 2022; and email, 22 June 2023.

11 Email from Mohammad Wakil Jamshidi, Chief of Staff, UNMAS/DMAC, 16 May 2017.

12 Email from Mohammad Akbar Oriakhil, DMAC, 17 March 2021.

13 Interview with Qari Nooruddin Rustamkhail, DMAC, 4 June 2022; and email, 15 June 2022.

14 Interviews with international and national implementing partners, Kabul, 4–10 June 2022.

15 UNMAS, "Humanitarian Mine Action in Afghanistan", 10 February 2022.

16 Interview with Paul Heslop, Chief of Mine Action Programme, UNMAS, 7 June 2022; and UNMAS, "Humanitarian Mine Action in Afghanistan", 9 April 2022.

17 Email from Mohammad Wakil Jamshidi, UNMAS, 20 March 2023.

18 Email from Mohammad Wakil Jamshidi, UNMAS, 7 May 2023.

19 Joint statement of the MAPA implementing partners, 23 January 2023.

## ENVIRONMENTAL POLICIES AND ACTION

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Afghanistan has a national standard on environmental management in mine action. In addition, individual operators, such as The HALO Trust (HALO) and the Danish Refugee Council Humanitarian Disarmament and Peacebuilding sector (DRC), have institutional policies in place at headquarters level. Use of intrusive technologies such as flails by some operators has caused friction with local communities in past years.

HALO employs manual teams to remove dense vegetation while mechanical assets used for anti-personnel mine (including improvised mine) clearance, including ploughs and cultivators, which excavate to a depth of 30 centimetres, are broadly welcomed by local communities which take advantage of area clearance to irrigate land and plant crops.<sup>20</sup> IPs commented that farmers welcomed use of assets such as rippers which softened land that had hardened as a result of long non-use due to mine or UXO contamination.<sup>21</sup>

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## GENDER AND DIVERSITY

Plans to increase the role of women in mine action in Afghanistan have mostly stalled in the face of Taliban bans on women's employment. Before the Taliban takeover of August 2021, DMAC's 2016–20 strategic plan included gender mainstreaming as one of four main goals. It stated that "achievable targets, reflecting prevailing circumstances and conditions, will be adopted to support and encourage progress wherever possible."<sup>22</sup> Levels of female employment in the sector remained low but by the start of 2021, the MAPA's workforce included over 200 women.<sup>23</sup> After August 2021, Taliban imposed progressively stricter regulation on women and girls, banning women from working for foreign non-governmental organisations (NGOs) in December 2022<sup>24</sup> and from working for the United Nations in April 2023.<sup>25</sup>

Some exceptions have remained for humanitarian work, including mine action. In 2022, DMAC said it remained possible for women to work in the MAPA<sup>26</sup> and some IPs reported employing more women in 2022 than before the Taliban takeover. UNMAS convened the first post-regime-change meeting of a Gender and Diversity Technical Working Group in February 2022<sup>27</sup> and IPs continued to employ female staff in office and field jobs.<sup>28</sup> UNMAS also provided grants to four Afghan IPs (AREA, DAFA, MDC, and OMAR) early in 2022 to support equality and inclusion mainstreaming.<sup>29</sup>

In 2023, IPs say female office staff have worked from home and in a number of areas some women have been able to conduct risk education field visits but access depends on relations between individual IPs and local authorities.<sup>30</sup> National IPs, forced to lay off hundreds of deminers as a result of funding cuts, have sharply reduced the number of their female staff. DAFA employed 12 women in 2022, including a gender mainstreaming officer and four explosive ordnance risk education (EORE) staff but in 2023 it has only one female employee working from home.<sup>31</sup> OMAR said it employed 53 women in 2022 but in 2023 had reduced the number to three.<sup>32</sup>

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20 Interviews with Farid Homayoun, Country Director, HALO, 4 June 2022; and Søren Adser Sørensen, Head of Humanitarian Disarmament in Afghanistan, DRC, 6 June 2022.

21 Email from Mir Mohammad, Executive Operation Manager, MCPA, 12 April 2023.

22 DMAC, "National Mine Action Strategic Plan 1395–1399 (2016–2020)", State Ministry for Disaster Management and Humanitarian Affairs, undated but 2016, p. 17.

23 Email from Mohammad Akbar Oriakhil, DMAC, 17 March 2021.

24 UNMAS estimated the ban would result in 150 women working in mine action losing their jobs, 456,300 women and girls being deprived of EORE and 8,700 women would not benefit from VA, including physical rehabilitation, psychosocial support and social/economic inclusion. Participant notes from UNMAS meeting with MAPA directors, 3 January 2023.

25 "Taliban bans female NGO workers, jeopardising aid efforts," *Reuters*, 24 December 2022; and "Taliban ban on women working for the UN an 'internal' issue," *Reuters*, 12 April 2023.

26 Interviews with Qari Nooruddin Rustamkhail, DMAC, 4 June 2022; Søren Adser Sørensen, DRC, 6 June 2022; Farid Homayoun, HALO, 4 June 2022; and with Awal Khan, QA Manager, OMAR, and Zarina Omar, EORE Manager & Gender Focal Point, OMAR, 8 June 2022.

27 Email from Sohaila Hashemi, UNMAS, 23 February 2022.

28 Interviews with international and national implementing partners, Kabul, 4–10 June 2022.

29 Email from Sohaila Hashemi, UNMAS, 6 March 2022.

30 Email from MAPA Implementing Partner, May 2023.

31 Email from Bismillah Haqmal, Operations and Planning Manager, DAFA, 10 April 2023.

32 Email from Abid K. Fazel, Deputy Director Programme, OMAR, 6 April 2023.

## INFORMATION MANAGEMENT AND REPORTING

Prior to the August 2021 change of government, DMAC had embarked on upgrading the MAPA's IMSMA database from New Generation to IMSMA Core. Since the Taliban takeover, information management for the MAPA has suffered severe disruption as a result of the financial crisis and diplomatic isolation facing the IEA, DMAC's loss of staff, and upheavals in the working arrangements between DMAC and UNMAS.<sup>33</sup>

IPs reported their operating results to be checked by the Liaison Office and they were then approved by DMAC, but for extended periods their reports were not uploaded and the database was not up to date. DMAC, resumed management of the IMSMA database in February 2023 after receiving government funding to pay salaries of IM staff and IPs reported directly to DMAC. It submitted an Article 7 report covering 2022 at the end of May 2023 underscoring its commitment to fulfil its CCM obligations but the report lacked significant detail previously available.<sup>34</sup>

## PLANNING AND TASKING

Afghanistan did not have a CMR-specific strategic plan before August 2021 but the Article 4 deadline extension request released in that month, days before the collapse of the government, by the requested new deadline of March 2026.<sup>35</sup> The IEA has repeatedly committed to fulfilling Afghanistan's obligations under the CCM and the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention (APMBC)<sup>36</sup> but prospects for achieving completion are uncertain due to funding constraints.

The US Office of Weapons Removal and Abatement (PM/WRA) has been the main source of funding for CMR clearance and before August 2021 had committed to funding clearance of the remaining CMR contamination.<sup>37</sup> The future of US funding for Afghanistan is unclear at a time when IEA policies, particularly towards women, have prompted many

to donors to reassess their support. Early in 2022, UNMAS set ambitious resource mobilisation targets with a view to increasing the number of Quick Response Teams matching post-conflict needs for emergency explosive ordnance disposal (EOD) call-outs, survey and clearance.<sup>38</sup> Operators say UNMAS's late 2022 decision to halt funding for clearance has particularly affected national IPs, adding to uncertainty over the MAPA's prospects.

DMAC continued regular contact with implementing partners in 2022 although constrained by a shortage of staff. DMAC reportedly set monthly targets for clearance of different types of explosive hazard based on teams' productivity in the previous year and encouraged operators to focus on hazardous areas ranked as very high or high priority.<sup>39</sup>

## LAND RELEASE SYSTEM

### STANDARDS AND LAND RELEASE EFFICIENCY

Afghanistan has comprehensive national mine action standards that are International Mine Action Standard (IMAS)-compatible and before August 2021 were subject to regular review. CMR survey and clearance are addressed in Afghanistan Mine Action Standard (AMAS) 06.02 (Battle Area Clearance).<sup>40</sup>

A Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining (GICHD) capacity assessment in 2019 noted that DMAC is "proactive in introducing new AMAS as and when needed" but commented that it had not updated them regularly and that most of the AMAS were developed between 2011 and 2013. It called attention to persistently high percentage of land released through full clearance and said some chapters needed to be reviewed and updated to promote greater efficiency.<sup>41</sup>

33 Interviews with international and national implementing partners, Kabul, 4–10 June 2022; and emails from IPs, April–May 2023.

34 Emails from Mohammad Wakil Jamshidi, UNMAS, 7 May 2023; and Abdul Habib Rahimi, DMAC, 3 May 2023; and Article 7 Report (covering 2022), 31 May 2023.

35 Afghanistan submitted an initial draft of its extension request to the CCM Implementation Support Unit on 29 July 2021 and its official request for an extension on 3 August 2021. After consultations with the CCM Analysis Group, Afghanistan submitted a text containing further revisions on 10 August 2021.

36 Statement of Afghanistan, CCM Intersessional meetings, 16–17 May 2022; and interview with Qari Nooruddin Rustamkhail, DMAC, 4 June 2022.

37 Article 4 deadline Extension Request, 3 August 2021, p. 12.

38 Interview with Paul Heslop and Malcom MacDonald, Senior Technical Advisor, UNMAS, Kabul, 6 June 2022.

39 Email from Søren Adser Sørensen, DRC, 21 May 2023.

40 Statement by Mohammed Shafiq, Director, DMAC, GICHD workshop, Geneva, 26 March 2019.

41 GICHD, Integrated Capacity Assessment Report, 5 July 2019 (draft), p. 7.

## OPERATORS AND OPERATIONAL TOOLS

Afghanistan's Article 4 deadline extension request indicated that 10 demining NGOs and 23 commercial companies are capable of conducting CMR clearance.<sup>42</sup> In practice, only one IP, DAFA, has conducted significant recent CMR clearance, while two others, HALO and MCPA, have conducted survey of cluster munition-contaminated areas.

Most CMR clearance was conducted by DAFA which had 341 personnel in operations out of total staff of around 400 working in 2022, but the number has fallen sharply in 2023 as a result of the fall in international donor funding and UNMAS's decision to halt VTF funding for operations. DAFA had four operational contracts in 2022 and employed seven BAC teams with 117 personnel working on clearance of CMR and other UXO, 8 manual demining teams with 136 personnel deployed mainly in Paktika and Baghlan provinces, and 16 small teams with a total of 64 people working on improvised mines in Kandahar. DAFA also operated three mechanical teams and five EORE teams. After completing the last of its four projects at the end of January 2023 DAFA reported it no longer had any active projects and faced significant cuts in the workforce.<sup>43</sup>

The US Department of State funded CMR clearance by DAFA in 2021 and before August 2021 had committed to funding clearance of the remaining CMR contamination.<sup>44</sup> International sanctions complicated financial transfers to Afghanistan and caused uncertainty about US financing for national IPs that lacked overseas bank accounts,<sup>45</sup> but DAFA reported that it continued to receive US funding directly in 2022.<sup>46</sup>

Norwegian People's Aid (NPA) had a team of 18 people consisting of six international staff (a country director, finance manager, and four senior technical advisers) and seven national technical advisers, and provides third-party monitoring of all US grants to IPs in Afghanistan.<sup>47</sup> In 2022, NPA monitored 19 grants to nine IPs worth \$14.63 million that spanned mine and CMR clearance as well as weapons and ammunition disposal, conventional weapons destruction, and community survey. In 2023, NPA was monitoring 12 grants amounting to \$12.25 million.<sup>48</sup>

## LAND RELEASE OUTPUTS AND ARTICLE 4 COMPLIANCE

### LAND RELEASE OUTPUTS IN 2022

Afghanistan appears to have released more than 3km<sup>2</sup> of CMR-contaminated land in 2022 but inconsistencies in the data prevented a clear determination of the progress in 2022. The CCM Article 7 report DMAC submitted for 2022 does not record any land released through survey but shows the MAPA released a total of 5,071,865m<sup>2</sup> through clearance.<sup>49</sup> That appeared to represent a roughly 40% increase over the total CMR area amounting to 3.6km<sup>2</sup> reportedly released through survey and clearance in 2021.<sup>50</sup> However, DMAC's data included two tasks totalling almost 2.0km<sup>2</sup> conducted mostly in the previous 2022 year and differed in some details from results reported by IPs.<sup>51</sup>

### SURVEY IN 2022

DAFA was the only IP that reported conducting CM-focused survey and clearance in 2022 (see Table 3), concentrating on the province identified as the most heavily CMR-contaminated.<sup>52</sup>

Table 3: NTS/TS of cluster munition-contaminated area by DAFA in 2022<sup>53</sup>

Province / Region / District	Area surveyed (m <sup>2</sup> )	Area cancelled through NTS (m <sup>2</sup> )	Area reduced through TS (m <sup>2</sup> )
Paktya/Zurmat	3,250,191	76,429	104,100
<b>Total</b>	<b>3,250,191</b>	<b>76,429</b>	<b>104,100</b>

42 Article 4 deadline extension request, 3 August 2021, Executive Summary.

43 Email from Bismillah Haqmal, DAFA, 10 April 2022; and interview, Kabul, 8 June 2022.

44 Article 4 deadline Extension Request, 3 August 2021, p. 12.

45 Interview with Paul Heslop and Malcom MacDonald, UNMAS, 6 June 2022.

46 Emails from Bismillah Haqmal, DAFA, 23 and 26 June 2022.

47 Emails from Mats Hektor, Senior Technical Adviser, NPA, 12 and 19 June 2023.

48 Email from Sayed Wali, Information Management Officer, NPA, 21 June 2023.

49 CCM Article 7 Report (for 2022), Form F(2).

50 Email from Olivier Demars, UNMAS, 24 April 2022.

51 The CCM Article 7 Report includes two tasks in the Zurmat district of Paktya district, one of 601,450m<sup>2</sup> and the second covering 1,373,082m<sup>2</sup> started in March 2021 and completed in April 2022.

52 Email from Bismillah Haqmal, DAFA, 10 April 2023.

53 Ibid.

## CLEARANCE IN 2022

Afghanistan's CCM Article 7 Report for 2022 recorded clearance of 5.1km<sup>2</sup> of CMR-affected land resulting in destruction of 327 submunitions. It did not provide details of items destroyed in the course of implementing partners' EOD operations.<sup>54</sup>

The clearance results, however, included two tasks in Paktya province accounting for almost 2km<sup>2</sup> where operations started in April 2021 and clearance would have occurred mostly in 2021. At the same time, DAFA, the only IP conducting CMR area clearance, reported that it released 3.4km<sup>2</sup> of CMR hazardous areas through clearance in 2022, destroying 163 submunitions. This was marginally less than the 3.6km<sup>2</sup> area DAFA cleared in 2022 when it destroyed 280 submunitions. HALO noted it has encountered scattered submunitions, particularly Russian items, in the course of BAC and EOD tasks but did not destroy any CMR in 2022.<sup>55</sup> DRC destroyed 77 submunitions in the course of spot EOD tasks conducted in 2022, nearly half of them in Kabul province.<sup>56</sup>

**Table 4: CMR clearance by DAFA in 2022\***

Province / Region / District	Area cleared (m <sup>2</sup> )	Submunitions destroyed	Other UXO destroyed
Paktya/Zurmat	2,037,239	115	16
Nangarhar/Pachir Agam	1,326,490	48	50
<b>Totals</b>	<b>3,363,729</b>	<b>163</b>	<b>66</b>

\* Figures for items destroyed include destruction during clearance and technical survey.

## ARTICLE 4 DEADLINE AND COMPLIANCE



Under Article 4 of the CCM, Afghanistan is required to destroy all CMR in areas under its jurisdiction or control as soon as possible, but not later than 1 March 2026. In a statement to the CCM intersessional meetings in May 2022, Afghanistan said it "commits itself to fulfilling its obligations in relation to the Convention on Cluster Munitions and other international conventions to which Afghanistan is already a state party."<sup>57</sup>

The MAPA has more than sufficient capacity to complete clearance of known CMR contamination but prospects for realising that ambition are already in jeopardy, principally because of lack of funding by international donors. Afghanistan's Article 4 deadline extension request included clearance targets that provided for completing clearance of Nangahar province by the end of 2023.<sup>58</sup> The lack of CMR clearance in the first half of 2023 makes clear that target will be missed, undermining the Article 4 request's timeline for completion.

A second risk is the possibility that the estimate of contamination will continue to rise as survey of areas that were inaccessible to IPs before the Taliban takeover because of insecurity finds significant, previously unrecorded cluster munition-contaminated areas. Survey between 2018 and 2022 added nearly 19km<sup>2</sup> of CMR contamination to the database,<sup>59</sup> significantly exceeding the area released by clearance (see Table 5) and raising the overall contamination estimate from 4km<sup>2</sup> at the end of 2018 to 10km<sup>2</sup> at the end of 2021. Despite clearance of 3.4km<sup>2</sup> in 2022, the Article 7 report submitted by DMAC for 2022 still identified contamination at the end of the year of close to 10km<sup>2</sup>,<sup>60</sup> and this appears not to take into account the previously unknown cluster munition-contaminated areas discovered in 2022.

54 CCM Article 7 Report (for 2022), Form F(2).

55 Emails from Farid Homayoun, HALO, 5 and 22 June 2023.

56 Email from Søren Adser Sørensen, DRC, 21 May 2023.

57 Statement of Afghanistan, CCM Intersessional meetings, Geneva, 16–17 May 2022.

58 Article 4 deadline Extension Request, August 2021, Annex.

59 See Mine Action Review reports for 2018 to 2022.

60 Article 7 Report (for 2022), Form F(5), footnote.



**Table 5: Five-year summary of CMR clearance**

Year	Area cleared (km <sup>2</sup> )
2022	3.4
2021	3.6
2020	0
2019	2.7
2018	4.2
<b>Total</b>	<b>13.9</b>

With respect to Table 5, Afghanistan's Article 7 report for 2019 recorded CMR clearance in 2018 of 3.62km<sup>2</sup>. DMAC explained that this might include tasks started in 2018 and that 2.72km<sup>2</sup> represented clearance conducted in 2019. This total included clearance of 1.07km<sup>2</sup> which resulted in clearance of only 2 submunitions but 1,205 items of UXO. Mine Action Review consequently assessed this task as BAC and excluded it from its summary of CMR clearance, which it reported as amounting to 1.65km<sup>2</sup>. DMAC has since confirmed that due to the suspected presence of CMR the task was cleared applying cluster munition clearance protocols, not BAC.<sup>61</sup> Accordingly, Mine Action Review has accepted CMR clearance for 2019 of 2.72km<sup>2</sup>.

## PLANNING FOR MANAGEMENT OF RESIDUAL CONTAMINATION

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There is no active planning for the management of residual contamination.

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<sup>61</sup> Email from Mohammad Akbar Oriakhil, DMAC, 23 June 2021.