

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

KEY DATA

CLUSTER MUNITION CONTAMINATION: MEDIUM

NATIONAL ESTIMATE

9.28 KM²

SUBMUNITION
CLEARANCE IN 2023

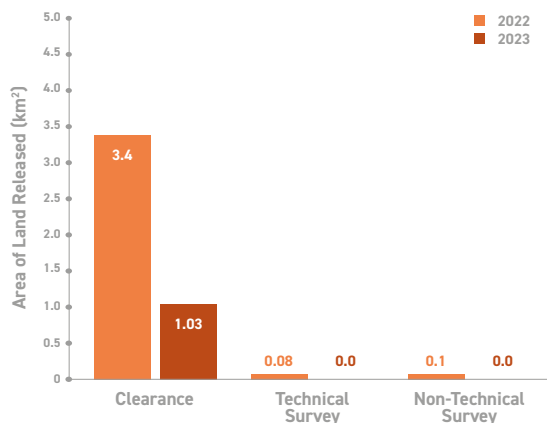
1.03 KM²

SUBMUNITIONS
DESTROYED IN 2023

1,139

(INCLUDING 1,134
THROUGH SPOT TASKS)

LAND RELEASE OUTPUT



KEY DEVELOPMENTS

The Directorate of Mine Action Coordination (DMAC) and the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) reached agreement in October 2023 on a framework for technical support through a Mine Action Technical Cell (MATC). This ended a disruptive, nearly two-year hiatus in institutional arrangements for management and coordination of the Mine Action Programme of Afghanistan (MAPA). Under the agreement, the MATC supported planning, tasking, and quality management and data entry into the Information Management System for Mine Action (IMSMA) database.

The UN Mine Action Service (UNMAS) reversed a decision to halt funding for operations through the UN Voluntary Trust Fund for Mine Action (VTF). DMAC reaffirmed its commitment to fulfilling its Article 4 obligations under the Convention on Cluster Munitions (CCM) in a written statement to the Meeting of States Parties in September 2023. A Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention (APMBC) Article 5 deadline extension request sent in April 2024 restated Afghanistan's ambition to complete clearance of cluster munitions remnants (CMR) in 2026.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ACTION

- The authorities of the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan (IEA) should increase national funding to the mine action sector.
- The IEA and DMAC should enhance the engagement of women and minorities in mine action.
- DMAC should update its programme of work for fulfilling its CCM Article 4 obligations and completing clearance of remaining CMR contamination.

ASSESSMENT OF NATIONAL PROGRAMME PERFORMANCE

Criterion	Score (2023)	Score (2022)	Performance Commentary
UNDERSTANDING OF CMR CONTAMINATION (20% of overall score)	8	8	Afghanistan has a small amount of known CMR contamination and did not identify any other hazardous areas in 2023, although operators believe some will be found in the course of new survey. Operators also continue to encounter scattered, mostly Russian "legacy" submunitions in the course of other tasks.
NATIONAL OWNERSHIP AND PROGRAMME MANAGEMENT (10% of overall score)	5	4	The MAPA is nationally managed but heavily dependent on international funding. International sanctions and competing donor priorities have led to a sharp fall in funding since the August 2021 Taliban takeover, leaving DMAC with only a skeleton management team. Agreement with the UN on the role and operations of an MATC provided a stable platform for managing and coordinating the national programme. Despite the shortage of resources, DMAC, the MATC, and implementing partners met regularly to discuss operational issues.
GENDER AND DIVERSITY (10% of overall score)	4	3	Draconian Taliban policies towards the employment of women eclipsed DMAC's pre-2021 commitment to mainstreaming gender in mine action in the 2016–20 strategic plan and the flexibility DMAC has demonstrated enabling continued employment of women in mine action. Implementing partners continued to employ some female staff working from home and to deploy mixed gender teams for risk education and survey in areas where local authorities agreed. The APMB Article 5 deadline extension request sent by the Taliban in April 2024 includes a section on gender and diversity that makes commitments to gender mainstreaming.
ENVIRONMENTAL POLICIES AND ACTION* (10% of overall score)	6	Not Scored	Afghanistan has a national standard on environmental management in mine action. Afghanistan's CCM Article 7 report affirms that all destruction of CMR is "carried out in accordance with the safety and environmental standards, to minimize damages to the private and public properties and to the environment".
INFORMATION MANAGEMENT AND REPORTING (10% of overall score)	5	4	Information management suffered severe disruption after the 2021 change of government that resulted in a major backlog of operational reports awaiting uploading into the national IMSMA database. DMAC resumed database management in February 2023 and submitted a CCM Article 7 report in May 2023 but remained acutely short of staff to operate the database. Agreement between DMAC and the UN on the role of an MATC in October 2023 included support to the database and the resulting increase in data processing staff saw a rapid reduction in the backlog of reports to be incorporated.
PLANNING AND TASKING (10% of overall score)	4	3	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.
LAND RELEASE SYSTEM** (10% 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 AMAS need comprehensive updating. Since 2021, resource constraints left DMAC without sufficient quality management (QM) capacity for field visits. Since October 2023, the MATC has conducted QM but with few staff to monitor the MAPA's more than 300 operational teams.
LAND RELEASE OUTPUTS AND ARTICLE 4 COMPLIANCE (20% of overall score)	5	7	CMR clearance was conducted by one operator in 2023 and the release of CMR hazardous areas plummeted to about one third of the previous year's due to the lack of donor funding. Afghanistan reaffirmed its commitment to fulfilling its Article 4 obligations at the Meeting of States Parties in September 2023. But it proved unable to complete clearance of Nangarhar province in 2023 as planned in its Article 4 extension request due to the downturn in donor support. The lack of funding also threatens its prospects for achieving the deadline of completing CMR clearance by March 2026.
Average Score	5.6	5.6	Overall Programme Performance: AVERAGE

* New criterion introduced in 2024 to assess performance.

** The weighting of this criterion was previously 20% of overall performance score, but is now given a 10% weighting.

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 (DRC)
- The HALO Trust
- 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). Until 2021, continuing conflict limiting access to areas affected by CMR resulted in persistent discoveries of previously unrecorded hazardous areas and fluctuating estimates of the extent of contamination. Since then, aided by improved security and access, official estimates have stabilised and shown a gradual decline.

Afghanistan's latest official estimate (as at the end of 2023) reported 15 hazardous areas affecting 9.28km² (see Table 1).¹ Three quarters of all CMR-contaminated area is in two south-eastern provinces of Nangarhar and Paktya. This compared with an estimate of "nearly 10km²" in its CCM Article 7 report at the end of May 2023² and 16 CMR hazardous areas covering 9.9km² reported by DMAC to

the CCM Intersessional meeting in May 2022.³ Operators acknowledge a possibility that additional hazardous areas may be found in the course of resurvey, notably in Nangarhar and Paktya,⁴ but no CMR contamination was added to the database in 2023.⁵

Table 1: Cluster munition-contaminated area (at end 2023)⁶

Province	CHAs	Area (m ²)
Bamyan	1	258,887
Nangarhar	3	2,029,611
Samangan	2	11,715
Paktya	9	6,983,484
Totals	15	9,283,697

OTHER EXPLOSIVE REMNANTS OF WAR AND LANDMINES

CMR make up only a small part of Afghanistan's extensive explosive ordnance contamination. This includes nearly 350km² of mined area⁷ and 166km² contaminated by a wide range of ERW other than CMR, not including 38 former NATO firing ranges. DMAC assessed these ranges as covering 632km² but said it is confident the size will be substantially reduced by survey.⁸

NATIONAL OWNERSHIP AND PROGRAMME MANAGEMENT

The MAPA's management structure has remained unchanged since the Taliban takeover of government in August 2021. The mine action sector falls under the authority of a High

Commission for Disaster Management led by a first deputy prime minister and supported by an interministerial board.⁹ The IEA retained Afghanistan's National Disaster

1 Email from Aimal Safi, Senior Technical Advisor, DMAC, 8 May 2024.

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

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

4 Email from Bismillah Haqmal, Operations and Planning Manager, DAFA, 13 May 2024.

5 Email from Aimal Safi, DMAC, 8 May 2024.

6 Email from Aimal Safi, DMAC, 8 May 2024.

7 APMBC Article 5 deadline Extension Request, April 2024, p. 6. The request records anti-personnel (AP) mined area of 176.3km² and anti-vehicle (AV) mined area of 172.4km².

8 Article 5 deadline Extension Request, April 2024, p. 6. DMAC is confident that resurvey of 38 former firing ranges will significantly reduce the present estimated area of ERW contamination.

9 Article 5 deadline Extension Request, submitted April 2024, p. 16.

Management Authority in the role of a national mine action authority, setting overall policy, while DMAC continues to be responsible for strategic planning, managing and coordinating survey and clearance operations, information management, and quality management (QM). The IEA-appointed director of DMAC has commented that the only change resulting from the change of government was in the personnel running it.¹⁰

DMAC's ability to function has been severely constrained by international sanctions imposed on the IEA and a sharp downturn in the donor funding on which mine action was largely dependent. DMAC had completed the transition from being a project of UNMAS to national management in June 2018. By 2021, the Government of Afghanistan paid salaries of only 15 of DMAC's 155 staff, the rest being paid by UNMAS and the US Department of State's Bureau of Political and Military Affairs (PM/WRA) through ITF Enhancing Human Security.¹¹ After August 2021, international sanctions imposed on the IEA ended the cooperation agreement between UNMAS and DMAC as well as US funding through the International Trust Fund, and its technical staff on internationally funded salaries mostly transferred to UNMAS. DMAC's active staff as at May 2024 consisted of the director and 14 other staff, including the heads of planning and operations and an information management officer.¹²

Since the 2021 change of government, DMAC and UNMAS negotiated a series of agreements creating mechanisms for

cooperation to maintain coordination and technical support for the MAPA.¹³ A UN Security Council resolution in March 2022, renewed in 2024, mandated UNAMA to "advise and coordinate explosive ordnance threat mitigation measures in support of humanitarian and development initiatives, support the coordination of the humanitarian mine action sector."¹⁴

A Liaison Office set up in June 2022 ceased operating in November 2022 due to lack of funds but resumed operation in January 2023 until DMAC suspended it in April of the same year. In October 2023, DMAC and UNAMA agreed on the creation of a Mine Action Technical Cell. In 2024 it employed a total staff of 51 providing technical support to DMAC in planning and prioritisation (one staff), operations coordination (six staff), data entry (5 staff), QM (14 staff), as well as one staff each working on risk education; gender, diversity, and inclusion; and victim assistance. DMAC had seven regional offices before the change of government but since then has lacked funding and staff to maintain them. The MATC instead has operated four regional offices in Herat, Jalalabad, Kandahar, and Kunduz. Donor funding for the MATC has remained precarious and short-term, on occasion necessitating the issuance of staff termination notices that were later withdrawn on receipt of new funding. As of April 2024, MATC funding was due to expire at the end of June although it had received positive indications of additional support.¹⁵

GENDER AND DIVERSITY

The Taliban's crackdown on women's employment and education left severely limited space for women's continuing engagement in key humanitarian services such as health and this has included mine action. DMAC stated in 2022 that it remained possible for women to work in the MAPA¹⁶ and in 2023 some implementing partners (IPs) reported employing more women than before the change of government, including in field operations as well as in office roles. A major obstacle to employment of women by national IPs has been a sharp downturn in donor funding forcing many to lay off many of their deminers.

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."¹⁷ Afghanistan's APMB Article 5 deadline extension request sent in April 2024—but which had yet to be accepted and circulated by the APMB Implementation Support Unit (ISU)

and the Committee on Article 5 Implementation at the time of writing—says DMAC, in consultation with IPs, has developed a gender and diversity mainstreaming policy for the MAPA "and it is subject to review and further development."¹⁸ It states additionally that a National Mine Action Strategic Plan for 2021–2026 which has yet to be released sets out a vision and objectives that are "G & D sensitive" and that "a standalone goal has also been set on inclusion and empowerment of women and other marginalized groups in mine action."¹⁹

The extension request acknowledges the very low level of employment of women and people with disabilities in mine action, put at 4% and 1% respectively, but identifies a number of actions it says are being taken to strengthen gender and diversity in mine action. These include monthly meetings of a technical working group led by DMAC and involving UNMAS and IPs and training to improve the capacity of female staff. Mine action data continue to be disaggregated by gender and age.²⁰

10 Interview with Qari Nooruddin Rustamkhail, Director, DMAC, in Kabul, 4 June 2022.

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

12 Email from Aimal Safi, DMAC, 12 May 2024.

13 For more details of mine action coordination and the role of the UN after August 2021 see Mine Action Review, *Clearing the Mines* 2023, pp. 27–30.

14 UN Security Council Resolution 2626, 17 March 2022, operative para. 5(j). Operative para. 3 of Council Resolution 2727 of 17 March 2024 extended until 17 March 2025 UNAMA's mandate "as defined in" Resolution 2626.

15 Interview with Nick Pond, Chief of Mine Action Section, UNAMA, in Geneva, 28 April 2024; and email, 26 May 2024; and email from Aimal Safi, DMAC, 5 June 2024.

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

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

18 APMB Article 5 deadline Extension Request, April 2024, p. 57. The extension request had yet to be accepted and circulated by the APMB ISU and the Committee on Article 5 Implementation at the time of writing.

19 Ibid.

20 Ibid.

In practice, scope for deploying female staff vary according to the disposition of provincial and district authorities. Among national operators, Afghan Technical Consultants (ATC) reported hiring five female staff in 2023 for positions ranging from a risk education instructor to office clerks and cleaners;²¹ Demining Agency for Afghanistan (DAFA) deployed 12 women in mixed gender/mahram teams in 2023 and three in 2024;²² and Organisation for Mine Clearance and Afghan Rehabilitation (OMAR) has a female gender focal point who works from home because of restrictions and a mixed-gender risk education team.²³

All Danish Refugee Council (DRC)'s 21 risk education teams are mixed-gender (maharam²⁴) and women are also employed

in non-technical survey (NTS) teams and office roles. It employed a total of 30 women in its staff of 245, all but one of them in operational positions.²⁵ The HALO Trust reported that in May 2023 it was able to deploy 15 mixed-gender teams in Ghor, Kabul, Kunduz, and Nangarhar provinces. It received permission to deploy two more teams in Takhar province in June 2023 and expected to deploy all mixed-gender risk education teams from July 2023.²⁶ In July 2024, HALO reported that it was able to deploy 22 mixed-gender teams in 17 provinces in 2024, most recently securing permission to operate in Uruzgan, Logar, and Helmand.²⁷ HALO also said it employs members of all ethnic groups and its database tracks the organisation's ethnic diversity.²⁸

ENVIRONMENTAL POLICIES AND ACTION

Afghanistan has a national standard on environmental management in mine action, "AMAS 07.06 Environmental Management". Its CCM Article 7 report affirms that all destruction of CMR is "carried out in accordance with the safety and environmental standards, to minimize damages to the private and public properties and to the environment."²⁹

In addition, individual operators, such as the DRC, HALO, and FSD have global policies and standing operating procedures (SOPs) aligned with the local context. Use by some operators of intrusive technologies such as flails has caused friction with local communities in past years and the machines no longer appear to be in use.

MCPA has an SOP on environmental protection and trains staff in implementing it as well as avoiding use of mechanical assets that are harmful to the environment. DRC's Health, Safety and Environmental Management SOP considers

issues ranging from air, water and soil pollution, reduction in the volume of waste and safe disposal, reducing energy consumption and CO₂ emissions, land use and long-term risks. It states that "necessary measures should be implemented without damaging property, or infrastructure, in a manner that minimizes the environmental impact and is safe for local communities' men, women and children and for demining staff."³⁰ HALO's global SOP is aligned with International Mine Action Standards (IMAS) and in 2023 it trialled an environmental assessment tool using a questionnaire to establish an area's environmental characteristics. It also hired an environmental specialist to assess the impact of operations and advise on measures to mitigate harm.³¹ HALO is currently forming partnerships with organisations specialising in post-clearance activities to implement agricultural regeneration projects.³²

INFORMATION MANAGEMENT AND REPORTING

The MAPA is supported by an IMSMA New Generation database and prior to the change of government in August 2021 had planned to upgrade to IMSMA Core. Information management experienced severe disruption following the change of government in August 2021 and ensuing disagreements over the role of the UN. IPs continued to report to DMAC but shortages of staff resulted in extended interruptions when IP operation reports were not uploaded, delaying the database upgrade.³³ UNMAS, with support from the Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining (GICHD), had proposed to migrate data from IMSMA NG

to Core in 2022 but DMAC at that time did not agree. The upgrade to Core and closure of IMSMA NG appeared first in a 10-point list of priorities presented to a MAPA stakeholder meeting in January 2024.³⁴ The MATC reported in May 2024 that it was in discussion with DMAC on plans and a timeline for completing the upgrade.³⁵

DMAC reaffirmed its full control of information management in February 2023 but still required additional capacity to support the database. The October 2023 agreement between DMAC and UNAMA on a framework for technical support

21 Email from Farid Elmi, Operations Manager, ATC, 3 April 2024.

22 Email from Bismillah Haqmal, DAFA, 13 May 2024.

23 Email from Abid Fazel, Deputy Director, Programmes, OMAR, 31 March 2024.

24 Maharam teams combine a female staff member and male relative.

25 Email from Hannah Rose Holloway, Head of Humanitarian Disarmament and Peacebuilding, DRC, 23 April 2024.

26 Email from Farid Homayoun, HALO, 22 June 2023.

27 Email from Kim Feldewerth, HALO, 22 July 2024.

28 Email from Farid Homayoun, HALO, 22 June 2023.

29 CCM Article 7 Report (covering 2023), Form B. At the time of writing however, this had been removed from the UN Article 7 database, having been published on the database earlier in the year. The reason for the deletion has not been made public.

30 Email from Hannah Rose Holloway, DRC, 23 April 2024.

31 Email from Farid Homayoun, HALO, 21 June 2023.

32 Email from Kim Feldewerth, HALO, 22 July 2024.

33 See Mine Action Review *Clearing the Mines* 2023, pp. 27–30.

34 PowerPoint presentation, MAPA Stakeholders' Meeting, Kabul, 29 January 2024.

35 Emails from Nick Pond, UNAMA, 25 August 2023 and 26 May 2024.

through the Mine Action Technical Cell paved the way for stabilising data processing which is undertaken by six staff working under MATC contracts. By late April 2024, the database had a backlog of 10,400 pending reports to upload, of which 400 were survey and clearance reports and the remaining 10,000 related to victim assistance.³⁶

DMAC submitted a CCM Article 7 report covering 2023 in May 2024. At the time of writing however, this had been removed from the UN Article 7 database, having been published on the database earlier in the year. The reason for the deletion has not been made public.

PLANNING AND TASKING

Afghanistan does not have a CMR-specific strategic plan but the Article 4 deadline extension request submitted in August 2021, days before the collapse of the government, targeted completion by the requested new deadline of March 2026.³⁷ The IEA has repeatedly committed to fulfilling Afghanistan's obligations under the CCM³⁸ but prospects for completion depend on whether or not it receives donor support.

DMAC reports that it chairs a dedicated planning committee including representatives of UNMAS and IPs which meets once a year to review the MAPA's work plan. An aspirational work plan set out by DMAC in its the Article 5 deadline extension request it sent in April 2024 indicates that clearance of the remaining 15 CMR hazardous areas covering 9.2km² should be completed in the Afghan year 1404 (2025–26) under a budget of \$40 million for the sector.³⁹

LAND RELEASE SYSTEM

STANDARDS AND LAND RELEASE EFFICIENCY

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

A 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 the persistently high percentage of land released through full clearance and said some chapters needed to be reviewed and updated to promote greater efficiency.⁴¹ Updating the AMAS was included in a list of priorities presented in a MAPA stakeholders' meeting in January 2024.⁴²

OPERATORS AND OPERATIONAL TOOLS

The MAPA had approximately 360 teams comprising 3,600 personnel working in 2023 across the spectrum of mine action, including all forms of clearance, weapons and ammunition destruction, risk education, and victim assistance. Without increased donor support, that number was expected to fall in 2024.⁴³ Afghanistan's Article 4 deadline extension request indicated that 10 demining NGOs and 23 commercial companies are capable of conducting CMR clearance.⁴⁴ In practice, operations are constrained by the lack of funding and only one IP has conducted CMR clearance in each of the last two years: DAFA in 2022 and OMAR in 2023.

DAFA previously conducted most CMR clearance and in 2022 had seven BAC teams with 117 personnel working on clearance of CMR and other unexploded ordnance (UXO) out of a total staff of 400, but it completed the last of four

projects in January 2023 and did not receive any other contracts in the year.⁴⁵ By the end of 2023, DAFA reported employing a total staff of 175, including 114 in operations, mostly in survey-explosive ordnance disposal (EOD) teams. DAFA said it submitted a proposal for CMR clearance to the US PM/WRA in August 2023 with a view to starting work in November but it did not receive the funding to proceed.⁴⁶

OMAR reported employing a total of 287 personnel in 2023, including 275 staff working in 15 demining teams supported by one mechanical team with three staff but as a result of completing contracts in two provinces it has since released 185 deminers. OMAR reported it would complete all outstanding projects by the end of July 2024 and without additional contacts would be forced to lay off more staff.⁴⁷

36 Interview with Nick Pond, UNAMA, and Mohammed Wakhil, Deputy Programme Manager, MATC, in Geneva, 28 April 2024.

37 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.

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

39 APMBC Article 5 deadline Extension Request, April 2024, pp. 24 and 76–77.

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.

42 PowerPoint presentation, MAPA Stakeholders' Meeting, Kabul, 29 January 2024.

43 Email from Nick Pond, MATC, 26 May 2024.

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

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

46 Email from Bismillah Haqmal, DAFA, 13 May 2024.

47 Email from Abid Fazal, OMAR, 31 March 2024.

Norwegian People's Aid (NPA) had a team of 18 people consisting of six international staff (a country director, a finance manager, and four senior technical advisers) and

seven national technical advisers, providing third-party monitoring of all US grants to IPs in Afghanistan.⁴⁸

LAND RELEASE OUTPUTS AND ARTICLE 4 COMPLIANCE

LAND RELEASE OUTPUTS IN 2023

Afghanistan released a total of 1,029,908m² of CMR-contaminated area in 2023 (see Table 2),⁴⁹ less than one third of the CMR-contaminated area released the previous year. The 2022 results included small amounts of area (0.18km²) released through survey and 3.5km² through clearance in Nangarhar and Paktya provinces,⁵⁰ some of it funded by donor commitments from the previous year. In 2023, with little new funding received, DMAC said land was

released exclusively through subsurface clearance conducted in Pachiragam district of Nangarhar province.⁵¹

The number of submunitions destroyed in clearance operations fell from 163 items in 2022⁵² to 5 in 2023, along with 186 other items of UXO.⁵³ DMAC also reported 1,134 CMR items destroyed in EOD operations and by weapons and ammunition destruction (WAD) teams which visit steel mills processing scrap metal to check for the presence of explosive ordnance.⁵⁴

Table 2: CMR clearance in 2023

Operator	Province / Region / District	Area cleared (m ²)	Submunitions destroyed	Other UXO destroyed
OMAR	Nangarhar/Pachiragam	1,029,908	5	2,027
Totals		1,029,908	5	2,027

ARTICLE 4 DEADLINE AND COMPLIANCE

CCM ENTRY INTO FORCE FOR AFGHANISTAN: 1 MARCH 2012



ORIGINAL ARTICLE 4 DEADLINE: 1 MARCH 2022

FIRST EXTENSION REQUEST DEADLINE (4 YEARS): 1 MARCH 2026

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 statements to the CCM intersessional meetings in May 2022 and the Meeting of States Parties in September 2023, the IEA reaffirmed Afghanistan's commitment to fulfilling its CCM obligations.⁵⁵

The MAPA has more than sufficient capacity and knowledge of the problem to complete clearance of known CMR contamination within the target deadline. Improved security enabling country-wide access to former areas of conflict removes an impediment that previously slowed progress. But Afghanistan's remaining cluster munitions contamination exemplifies the wider challenge to progress in mine action as a result of the deterioration in donor funding.

Afghanistan's Article 4 deadline extension request prepared just before, and adopted just after, the change of government provided a timeline for completing clearance based on an understanding that the US PM/WRA had committed to fund clearance of remaining hazardous areas.⁵⁶ Due to changing donor priorities, that funding did not become available and PM/WRA has indicated it will not fund Afghanistan's mine action in 2025. The work plan set out in the Article 5 deadline extension request sent by Afghanistan in April 2024 still targets completion of CMR clearance in 2026 but the MAPA has already fallen behind the timeline for CMR clearance which called for completing operations in Nangahar province by the end of 2023.⁵⁷

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

49 Email from Aimal Safi, DMAC, 12 May 2024.

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

51 Email from Aimal Safi, DMAC, 12 May 2024.

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

53 Email from Aimal Safi, DMAC, 12 May 2024.

54 Emails from Aimal Safi, DMAC, 28 and 29 May 2024.

55 Statements of Afghanistan, CCM Intersessional meetings, Geneva, 16–17 May 2022; and to the Meeting of States Parties, Geneva, 12 September 2023.

56 Analysis of Afghanistan's Deadline Extension Request Under Article 4 of the Convention on Cluster Munitions, September 2021, p. 3.

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

Table 3: Five-year summary of CMR clearance

Year	Area cleared (km ²)
2023	1.0
2022	3.4
2021	3.6
2020	0
2019	2.7
Total	10.7

PLANNING FOR MANAGEMENT OF RESIDUAL CONTAMINATION

No plans are believed to be in place to address unexploded submunitions that will likely be found after the fulfilment of Afghanistan's Article 4 obligations.