

KEY DATA

**APMBC ARTICLE 5 DEADLINE:
1 MARCH 2030**

Unclear whether on track

**AP MINE CONTAMINATION:
182km²**

Massive
(National authority estimate)

LAND RELEASE OUTPUTS

Release of AP mined area	Release in 2024 (km ²)	Release in 2023 (km ²)
Clearance	10.44	14.47
Technical Survey	0.21	0.29
Non-Technical Survey	39.13	18.04

Destruction of AP mines during clearance, survey, and spot tasks	2024	2023
AP Mines destroyed	5,376 (incl. 3,989 in spot tasks)	5,971 (incl. 2,242 in spot tasks)

MAIN AP MINE SURVEY AND CLEARANCE OPERATORS IN 2024:

- Demining Agency for Afghanistan (DAFA)
- The HALO Trust (HALO)
- Organisation for Mine Clearance
- Danish Refugee Council (DRC)
- Mine Clearance Planning Agency (MCPA)
- Afghan Rehabilitation (OMAR)

KEY DEVELOPMENTS

Afghanistan requested a five-year extension of its Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention (APMBC) Article 5 deadline in 2024, which was granted at the Fifth Review Conference in Siem Reap in November. Lower donor financial support caused the Mine Action Programme of Afghanistan (MAPA) to lose one third of its personnel and cut United Nations (UN) capacity to support coordination and quality management. Implementing partners achieved a sharp rise in land cancelled through non-technical survey (NTS) and a slight increase in clearance of areas contaminated by improvised mines but clearance of "legacy" anti-personnel (AP) mines fell sharply.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ACTION

- The Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan (IEA) should increase and expedite delivery of national funding for the mine action sector, including by integrating demining into projects undertaken by government ministries.
- The IEA and the Directorate of Mine Action Coordination (DMAC) should enhance the participation of women in mine action.
- International donors should put funding for the critical support provided by the Mine Action Technical Cell (MATC) on a stable, long-term basis.

ASSESSMENT OF NATIONAL PROGRAMME PERFORMANCE

Criterion	Score (2024)	Score (2023)	Performance Commentary
UNDERSTANDING OF AP MINE CONTAMINATION (20% of overall score)	7	7	Afghanistan has a good, if incomplete, knowledge of pre-2001 or legacy AP mine contamination and improving knowledge of improvised mine contamination but still locates significant amounts of previously unrecorded mined area.
NATIONAL OWNERSHIP AND PROGRAMME MANAGEMENT (10% of overall score)	6	6	The MAPA is nationally managed but heavily dependent on international funding. Diplomatic isolation and reduced donor support since the 2021 Taliban takeover left DMAC with only a skeleton management team and has severely impacted UN coordination support.
GENDER AND DIVERSITY (10% of overall score)	3	4	Implementing partners, with DMAC's support, have been able to keep some women in office and field roles (risk education and community liaison) but draconian Taliban restrictions on women in public life undercut meaningful MAPA gender mainstreaming, and conditions for deploying female staff vary regionally.
ENVIRONMENTAL POLICIES AND ACTION (10% of overall score)	6	6	Afghanistan has a national mine action standard on environmental management and DMAC says operational planning considers environmental factors. Implementing partners have standard operating procedures on managing environmental impact that align with local conditions and international operators also follow their organisations' global policies.
INFORMATION MANAGEMENT AND REPORTING (10% of overall score)	6	5	DMAC and the MATC largely cleared the backlog of reports waiting to be uploaded after the hiatus following the August 2021 change of regime and DMAC is moving ahead with plans to upgrade the database from Information Management System for Mine Action New Generation to Core.
PLANNING AND TASKING (10% of overall score)	6	5	DMAC set out a five-year strategy in its 2024 Article 5 deadline extension request, including clearance milestones released in March, but its ambitious targets looked largely aspirational in the absence of donor funding to implement them.
LAND RELEASE SYSTEM (10% of overall score)	6	6	The MAPA has national mine action standards (AMAS) in Dari and English that are subject to regular review but which may need comprehensive updating. Reduced donor funding has severely impacted quality management capacity.
LAND RELEASE OUTPUTS AND ARTICLE 5 COMPLIANCE (20% of overall score)	6	6	The IEA was granted a five-year extension to Afghanistan's Article 5 deadline but steep declines in donor support have resulted in cuts in MAPA workforce that threaten to undermine its clearance targets. But in 2024, cancellation through NTS more than doubled which offset steep declines in clearance.
Average Score	5.9	5.8	Overall Programme Performance: AVERAGE

AP MINE SURVEY AND CLEARANCE CAPACITY

MANAGEMENT CAPACITY

- 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)
- Starlight Afghan Demining Services Company (SADC)

INTERNATIONAL OPERATORS

- Danish Refugee Council (DRC)
- Fondation suisse de déminage (FSD)
- The HALO Trust (HALO)

OTHER ACTORS

- UN Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA)/Mine Action Technical Cell (MATC)
- Norwegian People's Aid (NPA)

UNDERSTANDING OF AP MINE CONTAMINATION

Afghanistan estimated conventional and improvised AP mined area as covering 182km² at the end of 2024 (see Table 1), 3% more than a year earlier, reflecting increased knowledge of the improvised mine threat. The level of contamination by “legacy” conventional AP mines was 8% lower than at the end of 2023.¹ Operators identified 2.7km² of previously unrecorded mined area in 2024, a fraction of what they found in 2023 (49km²), and mostly located in the eastern half of the country.²

Table 1: Mined area by contamination type (at end 2024)³

Contamination type	CHAs	Area (m ²)	SHAs	Area (m ²)	Total area (m ²)
AP mines	1,235	90,240,361	40	13,066,524	103,306,885
Improvised mines	2,165	70,257,949	12	8,652,148	78,910,097
AP mined area totals	3,400	160,498,310	52	21,718,672	182,216,982
AV mines	1,049	170,312,576	107	38,779,458	209,092,034
Mined area totals	4,449	330,810,886	159	60,498,130	391,309,016

CHA = Confirmed hazardous area SHA = Suspected hazardous area

Legacy mine contamination, dating from before 2001, affects 30 (90%) of Afghanistan's 34 provinces but has fallen by one third – from 152km² at the end of 2020 to 103km² four years later. The mines, which are mainly concentrated in north eastern and central provinces, notably Baghlan, Badakshan, Kabul and Parwan (see Table 2), result from the decade-long war of resistance that followed the Soviet invasion of 1979, the 1992–96 internal armed conflict, and the 1996–2001 fighting between the Taliban and the Northern Alliance. Much of what remains after two decades of clearance is located in remote and mountainous areas and as a result receives a lower clearance priority than other forms of explosive ordnance, which cause a higher number of casualties.

Table 2: AP mined area (excluding improvised mines) by region (at end 2024)⁴

Region	CHAs	Area (m ²)	SHAs	Area (m ²)	Total area (m ²)
North-east	445	31,429,918	8	1,755,310	33,185,228
Central	335	24,188,864	3	587,544	24,776,408
South	55	5,593,236	0	0	5,593,236
West	89	12,265,780	0	0	12,265,780
South-east	122	7,871,104	7	924,985	8,796,089
North	70	2,523,304	0	0	2,523,304
East	76	6,368,155	0	0	6,368,155
Totals	1,192	90,240,361	18	3,267,839	93,508,200

Improvised mines extensively used in the years leading up to the Taliban's 2021 takeover have been identified in 26 provinces,⁵ but are heavily concentrated in the south-west. Estimates of contamination continue to rise, increasing 24% in 2024 to 79km², although close to 90% is in SHAs (see Table 3). Almost all (99%) of confirmed contamination is in Kandahar province which, together with neighbouring Helmand and the south-eastern province of Ghazni, account for 61% of the total estimated contamination.⁶

1 Email from Aimal Safi, Senior Technical Advisor, DMAC, 26 March 2025.

2 Email from Aimal Safi, DMAC, 26 March 2025. The total included 161,599m² contaminated by a mix of AP and AV mines and other ERW.

3 Email from Aimal Safi, DMAC, 26 March 2025.

4 Emails from Aimal Safi, DMAC, 26 March and 15 July 2025.

5 2024 Article 5 deadline Extension Request, p. 45.

6 Email from Aimal Safi, DMAC, 26 March 2025.

Table 3: Improvised AP mined area by region (at end 2024)⁷

Region	CHAs	Area (m ²)	SHAs	Area (m ²)	Total area (m ²)
North-east	2	52,268	28	266,612	318,880
Central	0	0	276	7,615,026	7,615,026
South	7	8,568,085	987	36,852,872	45,420,957
West	0	0	243	6,128,494	6,128,494
South-west	0	0	9	252,315	252,315
South-east	0	0	354	10,856,249	10,856,249
North	3	31,795	118	2,718,094	2,749,889
East	0	0	149	5,568,287	5,568,287
Totals	12	8,652,148	2,164	70,257,949	78,910,097

OTHER EXPLOSIVE ORDNANCE CONTAMINATION

More than 90% of Afghanistan's explosive ordnance casualties in 2024 were caused by unexploded ordnance.⁸ Contamination includes cluster munition remnants (CMR) affecting around 9km² (see Mine Action Review's *Clearing Cluster Munition Remnants 2025* report) and a significant threat from anti-vehicle (AV) mines (see Table 4). Afghanistan's 2024 Article 5 deadline extension request identified 1,015 areas affected by AV mines only, covering more than 172km² at the start of 2024.⁹ The end of active conflict after the change of government opened areas

previously shut off by insecurity such as Ghazni, Wardak, and Zabul, which had AV mined areas inside villages that are a high priority for clearance.¹⁰

Afghanistan recorded 166km² of unspecified explosive remnants of war (ERW) at the start of 2024 but said it also had 38 former firing ranges used by International Security Assistance Forces in 15 provinces and which cover an estimated 632km², although it expected that survey would significantly reduce this area.¹¹

Table 4: Other explosive ordnance contamination¹²

Contamination	CHAs	Area (km ²)	SHAs	Area (km ²)	Total area (km ²)
AV mines	921	153.1	94	19.3	172.4
CMR	15	9.2	0	0	9.2
ERW	465	165.7	2	0.02	165.7
Totals	1,401	328.0	96	19.32	347.3

NATIONAL OWNERSHIP AND PROGRAMME MANAGEMENT

MAPA's management structure has remained unchanged since the Taliban takeover of government in 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.¹³ Afghanistan's National Disaster Management Authority remains in the role of a national mine action authority (NMAA), setting overall policy, while DMAC continues to be responsible for strategic planning; managing and coordinating survey and clearance operations; risk education, victim assistance, 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.¹⁴

DMAC's capacity remains severely constrained by the international sanctions imposed on the IEA regime and a sharp downturn in the donor funding on which the MAPA has always been largely dependent. DMAC completed the transition from being a project of the United Nations Mine Action Service (UNMAS) to national management in 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 UN Department of State's Office of Political and Military Affairs (PM/WRA) through ITF Enhancing Human Security.¹⁵

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ UNMAS Afghanistan Monthly Updates, February 2025.

⁹ 2024 Article 5 deadline Extension Request, March 2024, p. 6.

¹⁰ Interview with Farid Homayoun, Country Director, HALO, Kabul, 4 June 2022; and email, 22 June 2023.

¹¹ 2024 Article 5 deadline Extension Request, pp. 6, 35, 62 and 64.

¹² Ibid., pp. 46–47.

¹³ CCM Article 4 deadline Extension Request, 31 May 2025, pp. 9–10.

¹⁴ Interview with Qari Nooruddin Rustamkhail, Director, DMAC, in Kabul, 4 June 2022.

¹⁵ Email from Mohammad Akbar Oriakheil, DMAC, 17 March 2021.

After August 2021, international sanctions imposed on the IEA ended the cooperation agreement between UNMAS and DMAC, and DMAC technical staff on internationally funded salaries mostly transferred to UNMAS. In March 2025, DMAC employed 13 civil servants, including its director, and one contractor. Other DMAC staff included the Quality Management Senior Manager, Chief of Operations, and Head of Coordination, and managers of explosive ordnance disposal (EOD), planning, mechanical demining, mine detection dogs (MDDs), risk education, information, and investigations.¹⁶

A UN Security Council resolution from March 2022, which was renewed in 2025, 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.”¹⁷ DMAC and UNMAS cooperated through a series of interim arrangements designed to continue UN coordination and technical support for the MAPA, but they proved short term due to disagreements and financial shortfalls.¹⁸ These culminated in an October 2023 agreement on the UN providing cooperation through a Mine Action Technical Cell. The MATC employed 51 people at the end of 2024 supporting planning and prioritisation, operations coordination (six staff), information management (five staff), and quality management (fourteen staff), along with risk education, victim assistance, and gender and diversity. It also operated four regional offices in Kabul (covering the central region), Jalalabad, Kandahar, and Kunduz.¹⁹

FUNDING FOR AP MINE SURVEY AND CLEARANCE

National funding for mine action since 2021 was limited to the government paying the salaries of 14 DMAC staff and “some operational expenses,” reportedly amounting to a total of about \$40,000 a year.²⁰ Afghanistan’s updated Convention on Cluster Munitions (CCM) Article 4 deadline extension request submitted in 2025 reported that DMAC had established a Resource Mobilisation Team which met ANDMA’s leadership in December 2024 and later with the Prime Minister’s Office. The team concluded that “it is highly likely that the IEA will consider some funding” for clearance of explosive ordnance.²¹ In 2024, the Ministry of Mines and Petroleum funded some mine and battle area clearance by DAFA around the Aynak copper mines.²² The government has made no commitment as of July 2025 but DMAC hoped State funding would be available in late 2025 or early 2026.²³

Cuts in donor support for the MAPA resulted in mass lay-offs of deminers in 2024 and 2025 affecting all implementing partners but particularly national implementing partners (IPs). The suspension of US funding in February 2025 halted

10 projects employing 95 teams and 755 personnel, including 88 teams and 698 staff engaged in land release. It also severely impacted the MATC’s support for planning, tasking, and coordination.²⁴

The MATC, which received PM/WRA funding for January to August 2024 and from Germany for September to December 2024, was expecting to receive PM/WRA funding for the period January through October 2025. The suspension of PM/WRA funding resulted in the MATC cutting its staff by 73% to 14, and closing three of its four provincial offices (Jalalabad, Kandahar, and Kunduz) with the loss of regional staff and all quality management in the field.²⁵ The MATC was preparing to shut down at the end of July 2025 and had issued staff termination notices but the UK stepped in with funding from 1 August 2025 until the end of March 2026. The funding covered employment of nine technical staff in Kabul but also allowed for recruitment of six quality management officers (down from thirteen in 2024) and planning for a resumption of field visits.²⁶

GENDER AND DIVERSITY

Draconian Taliban policies excluding women from public life have still left some space for their engagement in sectors such as health and mine action. Afghanistan’s APMBC Article 5 deadline extension request submitted in 2024 said that DMAC, in consultation with IPs, had developed a gender and

diversity mainstreaming policy for the MAPA.²⁷ The CCM Article 4 deadline extension request affirms that its mine action programme is gender sensitive; that planning and prioritisation consider the needs and priorities of all; and that IPs have gender focal-points.²⁸

16 Email from Aimal Safi, DMAC, 26 March 2025.

17 UN Security Council Resolution 2626, 17 March 2022, operative para. 5(j). Operative para. 3 of Council Resolution 2777 of 17 March 2025 extended UNAMA’s mandate until 17 March 2026 “as defined in” Resolution 2626.

18 For more details on mine action coordination and the role of the UN after August 2021 see *Clearing the Mines 2023*, pp. 31–34.

19 Emails from Mohammad Wakil Jamshidi, Senior Technical Adviser, Mine Action Section, UN Assistance Mission in Afghanistan, 12 March 2025; and Mohammad Akhbar Oriakhil, Mine Action Operations Officer, UNMAS Afghanistan, 11 June 2025.

20 Email from Aimal Safi, DMAC, 12 January 2025.

21 Email from Aimal Safi, DMAC, 12 January 2025; and Updated 2025 CCM Article 4 deadline Extension Request, June 2025, p. 15.

22 Email from Bismillah Haqmal, Operations and Planning Manager, DAFA, 17 August 2025.

23 Email from Aimal Safi, DMAC, 15 July 2025.

24 UNMAS, “The Funding Cessation Impact on Mine Action Programme of Afghanistan”, PowerPoint presentation, 5 April 2025.

25 Email from Mohammad Wakil Jamshidi, Mine Action Section, UNAMA, 12 March 2025; and ‘Funding Cessations Impact on Mine Action Coordination, MATC PowerPoint Presentation, 7 April 2025.

26 Online interview with Nick Pond, Chief of Mine Action Section, UNAMA, and Mohammad Wakil Jamshidi, UNAMA, 13 August 2025.

27 Article 5 deadline Extension Request, p. 41.

28 2025 CCM Article 4 deadline Extension Request, 31 May 2025, pp. 17–18.

DMAC says it has government permission for women to work in the mine action sector and they can operate without facing any issues in all of the 32 provinces, with the exception of Kandahar and Uruzgan²⁹ and IPs also identify Helmand as particularly difficult. In practice, IPs report that although they continue to deploy women in *maharam*³⁰ teams for risk education and victim assistance, their involvement is limited. Operators say it depends on what local authorities permit, which is not consistent, and that it limits outreach to women and children. Not all IPs have gender focal points.

Most national IPs employed only a handful of female staff in 2024: ATC reported employing six women in its staff of 239, and OMAR a single female employee among its 64 staff.³¹

Funding cuts, which have impacted national IPs particularly severely, are driving down female employment in mine action even further. DAFA reported employing a gender focal point and 12 female staff in 2024 with funding from the UN's Afghanistan Humanitarian Fund. It expected the number of female staff to fall to six in 2025.³² MCPA, which employed six women in its staff of 133, said they would be out of a job in May 2025.³³ The 2,450 MAPA personnel working at the end of 2024, included 84 women and 13 persons with disabilities. The US suspension of funding in February 2025 halted employment of 30 women and three persons with disabilities.³⁴

Table 5: Gender composition of international operators in 2024³⁵

Operator	Total staff	Women staff	Total managerial or supervisory staff	Women managerial or supervisory staff	Total operational staff	Women operational staff
DRC	355	36 (10%)	62	1 (2%)	175	34 (19%)
FSD	43	0 (0%)	*2	*1 (50%)	40	0 (0%)
HALO	1,996	28 (1%)	25	3 (12%)	1,381	22 (2%)
Totals	2,394	64 (3%)	89	5 (6%)	1,596	56 (4%)

*Based outside Afghanistan.

ENVIRONMENTAL POLICIES AND ACTION

Afghanistan's national mine action standard (AMAS) 07.06 addresses environmental management, climate change and sets out an environmental protection policy. It requires operators to ensure environmental factors are considered in the planning of operations; that they conduct environmental impact assessments close to protected locations or where there is uncertainty about the environmental impact of operations; and that they include environmental factors in post-demining impact assessments.³⁶

DMAC factors a range of environmental issues into operational planning. These range from seasonal issues such as snow cover affecting deployment in mountainous to dealing with flood risks and ensuring deployment of

machinery compatible with local conditions.³⁷ Challenges that affected mine action in 2024 included heavy rain and severe flooding in the north-east interrupting operations and displacing mines and ERW.³⁸

Most IPs have their own standard operating procedures (SOPs) aligned with the local context. HALO, reporting that it is giving higher priority to environmental issues in all its programmes, pursued a project focused on regenerative agriculture in Kandahar province and the impact of mine clearance on soil quality. It employs solar panels to power offices and demining camps and has contracted an Afghan non-profit NGO, Ecology and Conservation of Afghanistan (ECO-A), to advise on post-clearance activities.³⁹

29 Email from Aimal Safi, DMAC, 26 March 2025.

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

31 Emails from Farid Elmi, Operations Manager, ATC, 8 July 2025; and Abid Fzel, Deputy Programme Manager, OMAR, 28 March 2025.

32 Emails from Bismillah Haqmal, DAFA, 17 and 18 August 2025.

33 Email from Mir Mohammad, Executive Operations Manager, MCPA, 27 March 2025.

34 Email from Mohammad Wakil Jamshidi, MATC, 12 March 2025.

35 Emails from Hannah Rose Holloway, Head of Humanitarian Disarmament, DRC, 1 May 2025; and Farid Homayoun, HALO, 16 April 2025.

36 AMAS 07.06 Environmental management in mine action, March 2017.

37 Email from Aimal Safi, DMAC, 5 June 2024.

38 Emails from Farid Homayoun, HALO, 16 April 2025; and Mir Mohammad, MCPA, 27 March 2025.

39 Email from Farid Homayoun, HALO, 16 April 2025.

INFORMATION MANAGEMENT AND REPORTING

The MAPA is supported by an Information Management System for Mine Action (IMSMA) New Generation database overseen by DMAC with support in 2024 of five IM staff from the MATC. After major disruption in information management between the change of regime in August 2021 and DMAC's agreement with the MATC in October 2023, it inherited a backlog of around 28,000 unprocessed reports. It reported clearing the backlog in 2024 alongside the year's reports of IP operations. MATC retained five IM staff in 2025 despite sharp human resource cuts imposed in January 2025 as a result of the PM/WRA's suspension of funding.⁴⁰

DMAC had planned to upgrade the database to IMSMA Core since before the change of government in August 2021. The Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining (GICHD) visited Afghanistan in May 2025 to conduct an assessment and IM workshops. DMAC expected work on the upgrade to start in late 2025 and for the process to last about two years.⁴¹

PLANNING AND TASKING

DMAC submitted an Article 5 deadline extension request in March 2024 asking for an additional five years until 31 March 2030 to achieve completion of AP mines and all other explosive ordnance at a projected total cost of \$256 million.⁴² The request provided for a three-year village-by-village re-survey of Afghanistan's 23 provinces to be conducted by

54 quick response teams (QRT) at a projected cost of \$10.5 million, starting in April 2025. It included a multi-year work plan which sets annual targets for clearance of AP mines and other ordnance. It envisaged completing clearance of all improvised mine contamination estimated to cover 63.5km² in the first three years of the extension period.⁴³

Table 6: Article 5 deadline extension request clearance targets (m²)⁴⁴

	2025–26	2026–27	2027–28	2028–29	2029–30
Improvised mines	8,617,978	19,741,276	15,175,976	0	0
AP mines	10,047,341	19,006,446	22,511,895	19,454,212	20,737,263
AP/AV mines	2,173,789	3,199,506	4,105,927	6,152,924	5,406,458

However, some assumptions and targets were quickly overtaken by developments. Improvised mine contamination estimated at 63.5km² in the extension request had increased to 79km² by the end of 2024 and total AP mine contamination had risen from 176km² in the request to 182km². The work plan called for deploying a total of 472 teams in 2025, including 269 teams to clear IM, 44 for AP mines, and 54 for survey/EOD.⁴⁵

IPs are tasked by DMAC with support from MATC in planning and prioritising operations. IPs reported DMAC convened regular meetings to discuss strategic plans and operational issues. Improved security since the Taliban takeover in 2021

has opened access to areas where their movement was previously curbed or prevented by conflict, but IPs reported sporadic obstacles to securing permission for international staff to travel to provinces and further intermittent obstruction by authorities at a local level. HALO experienced three occasions when staff were temporarily detained by local authorities and occasions where non-technical survey (NTS) teams' GPS devices were confiscated. Operators also reported local demands for clearance of tasks which did not fall within SOPs or operating criteria.⁴⁶

40 Email from Mohammad Wakil Jamshidi, Mine Action Section, UNAMA, 12 March 2025.

41 Emails from Aimal Safi, DMAC, 26 March and 15 July 2025; and from Mohammad Wakil Jamshidi, Mine Action Section, UNAMA, 12 March 2025; and interview with Russell Bedford, Country Director, and with Mats Hektor, Senior Technical Adviser, Norwegian People's Aid (NPA), 5 May 2025.

42 2024 Article 5 deadline extension request, p. 71.

43 Ibid., p. 58.

44 Ibid., p. 64.

45 Ibid., pp. 65–66.

46 Emails from Hannah Rose Holloway, DRC, 1 May 2025; and Farid Homayoun, HALO, 16 April 2025.

LAND RELEASE SYSTEM

STANDARDS AND LAND RELEASE EFFICIENCY

The MAPA has comprehensive NMAS that are compliant with IMAS. Before the change of government in August 2021 and the disruption to MAPA management, DMAC had reviewed them annually and amended them in consultation with IPs. In 2019, Afghanistan became the first country to release a standard for clearance of improvised mines (AMAS 06.09).⁴⁷ It was updated in 2023 to provide for mechanical clearance.⁴⁸

The 2025 CCM Article 4 deadline extension request states that all standards were under review and that updated standards would be released in 2025 for land release, clearance, NTS, and technical survey (TS).⁴⁹ DMAC reported the AMAS review

process started in 2024 with the establishment of a technical working group and the first workshop was held in February 2025. It expected all standards and SOPs would be updated in the course of 2025.⁵⁰

MAPA land release results have previously drawn attention for the persistently high percentage of full clearance, averaging 78% between 2018 and 2020,⁵¹ calling into question the efficiency of the MAPA survey and land release practices, but the balance has shifted. Official data showed full clearance accounted for a little over half the total area released in 2023 and a little under half (46%) in 2024.⁵²

OPERATORS AND OPERATIONAL TOOLS

MAPA staffing fell by approximately one third in 2024 as a result of donor funding cuts and it experienced further lay-offs in 2025. The MAPA operated 360 teams in 2023, employing approximately 3,600 personnel in survey, clearance, EOD, risk education, and victim assistance.⁵³ At the end of 2024, it had a total of 285 teams employing 2,450 personnel, of which national IPs had 56 teams with 669 personnel. US stop-work orders in February 2025 halted operations by 67 teams employing a total of 543 personnel.⁵⁴ By July 2025, the MAPA operated a total of 188 teams, including 85 conducting clearance as well as 47 QRTs. The remainder included 14 NTS teams, 39 risk education teams and 3 victim assistance teams.⁵⁵

Donor funding cuts have reduced the operating capacity of all IPs but particularly national IPs that lack international network support. DAFA, alone among national IPs, appears to have employed more staff in 2024 than the previous year, with manual teams and QRT funded by the United Kingdom, the UN's Afghanistan Humanitarian Fund (AHF), and the UN Central Emergency Response Fund conducting clearance of legacy and improvised mines.⁵⁶ ATC was assigned a survey, clearance, and risk education project funded by the AHF in July 2024 for which it added 65 personnel, but said the loss of US funding in 2025 would result in it laying off 174 staff.⁵⁷ MCPA, on completion of a clearance project funded by the AHF in 2024, laid off 108, mostly clearance staff. In 2022, MCPA operated 37 manual clearance teams employing 370 deminers.⁵⁸ At the start of 2025, it reported employing two

manual clearance teams with a total of twenty-five deminers, but had two survey projects under way funded by the UN and due for completion in July 2025.⁵⁹ MDC reported laying off 252 field staff in 2024.⁶⁰ OMAR, which had operated 41 manual teams with 738 deminers at the end of 2022, deployed 14 teams and 208 deminers in 2024, but had released almost all field operations staff by the end of the year.⁶¹

Among the international operators, Danish Refugee Council (DRC) assigned more teams to clearing improvised mines in 2024 than the previous year but its overall manual clearance capacity fell by more than half from 13 teams employing 104 deminers in 2023 to six teams with 36 deminers in 2024.⁶² In 2024, the Fondation suisse de déminage (FSD) lost funding from a key donor, the Patrip Foundation, which resulted in its laying off manual clearance, risk education, and victim assistance staff. Its demining capacity fell from five teams with 80 deminers in 2023 to two teams with 43 deminers in 2024 and the loss of PM/WRA funding in 2025 has resulted in further cuts.⁶³

HALO, much the biggest operator in Afghanistan with a programme spanning survey, mine and battle area clearance, weapons and ammunition disposal, and risk education, reduced overall staffing from 1,913 in 2023 to 1,851 in 2024, and braced for further staff losses in 2025. Clearance of improvised mines remained HALO's operational priority, and despite cuts in other parts of the programme it maintained the same number of deminers on this activity in 2024.⁶⁴

47 AMAS 06.10, March 2019, p. 5; Article 7 Report (covering 2020), Form F, p. 15.

48 Email from Farid Homayoun, HALO, 15 July 2024.

49 Revised 2025 Article 4 deadline Extension Request, p. 9.

50 Email from Aimal Safi, DMAC, 26 March 2025.

51 See for example GICHD, Integrated Capacity Assessment Report, 5 July 2019 (draft), p. 7.

52 Emails from Aimal Safi, DMAC, 8 May 2024 and 26 March 2025.

53 Interview with Nick Pond, UNAMA, 28 April 2024.

54 Email from Mohammad Wakil Jamshidi, Mine Action Section, UNAMA, 12 March 2025.

55 Online interview with Nick Pond and Mohammad Wakil Jamshidi, UNAMA, 13 August 2025.

56 Emails from Bismillah Haqmal, DAFA, 17 and 18 August 2025.

57 Email from Farid Elmi, Operations Manager, ATC, 8 July 2025.

58 Emails from Mir Mohammad, MCPA, 5 and 12 April 2023.

59 Email from Mir Mohammad, MCPA, 27 March 2025.

60 Email from Mohammad Shoab Hakimi, Director, MDC, 16 March 2025.

61 Email from Abid K. Fazel, Head of Programmes, OMAR, 28 March 2025.

62 Emails from Hannah Rose Holloway, Head of Humanitarian Disarmament, DRC, 23 April and 21 July 2024 and 1 May 2025.

63 Email from Yoshiyuki Shiomi, Programme Manager for Central Asia, FSD, 25 March 2025.

64 Email from Farid Homayoun, HALO, 16 April 2025.

NPA in 2024 had 18 staff providing third party monitoring of PM/WRA funded projects but following the change of administration in the United States it received a stop-work order in January 2025 and final termination notice in April 2025. By the end of March 2025, NPA retained only the

country director, a senior technical adviser, and national administrative staff required to complete closure of the US project by early August 2025, while exploring possibilities for continuing support for the MAPA.⁶⁵

Table 7: Operational clearance capacities deployed in 2024⁶⁶

Operator	Manual clearance teams	Total deminers	Animal detection capacity (dogs and handlers)	Machines/personnel	Comments
ATC	9	84	0	1/4	Includes one team/4 personnel on improvised mine clearance. Also 1 QRT team/3 staff
DAFA	6	93	0	3/12	Also 11 QRT teams/66 personnel and 11 teams/187 conducting battle area clearance
DRC	3	36	0	5/15	Also deployed 10 quick reaction teams/30 personnel
FSD	2	43	0	0	
HALO	70	739	0	23/153	30 AP manual teams/351 deminers and 40 IM teams/388 deminers. Also 2 QRT teams/9 personnel
MCPA	5	25	0	1/3	
MDC	0	0	0	7/0	
OMAR	14	208	0	1/4	10 AP teams/180 deminers, 4 IM teams/28 deminers
Totals	109	1,228	0	41/191	

LAND RELEASE OUTPUTS AND ARTICLE 5 COMPLIANCE

LAND RELEASE OUTPUTS IN 2024

Despite severe funding pressures, Afghanistan appears to have released close to the same amount of mined area in 2024 as the previous year. The MAPA released a total of 49.7km² through survey and clearance in 2024, according to official data (see Table 8).⁶⁷ This was 50% more than

the 32.8km² officially recorded in 2023, when the national database was still catching up with a backlog of operating results, and slightly (4%) below the 52km² that IPs reported releasing in 2023.⁶⁸

Table 8: Mined area release in 2024⁶⁹

Release of AP mined area	Release in 2024 (km ²)	Comments
Clearance	10.4	
Technical Survey	0.2	
Non-Technical Survey	39.1	Includes 11km ² cancelled through NTS.
Destruction of AP mines during clearance, survey, and spot tasks	2024	
AP mines destroyed	5,376	Includes 3,989 during spot tasks: 386 legacy and 3,603 improvised mines.

⁶⁵ Online interview with Russel Bedford, Country Director, and Mats Hektor, Senior Technical Adviser, NPA, 5 May 2025.

⁶⁶ Emails from Farid Elmi, ATC, 8 July 2025; Bismillah Haqmal, DAFA, 17 August 2025; Hannah Rose Holloway, DRC, 1 May 2025; Yoshiyuki Shiomi, FSD, 25 March 2025; Farid Homayoun, HALO, 16 April 2025; Mir Mohammad, MCPA, 27 March 2025; and Abid K. Fazel, OMAR, 28 March 2025.

⁶⁷ Email from Aimal Safi, DMAC, 26 March 2025.

⁶⁸ See Mine Action Review, *Clearing the Mines 2024*, p. 38.

⁶⁹ Emails from Aimal Safi, DMAC, 26 March and 15 July 2025.

DMAC reported the destruction of 5,376 AP mines in 2024 to Mine Action Review, including 687 conventional AP mines and 4,689 improvised mines.⁷⁰ This represented a 10% drop compared with the previous year, much smaller than the drop in the area released through clearance and reflecting

the predominant role of items destroyed in EOD operations, which accounted for nearly three quarters of the total.⁷¹ Afghanistan's Article 7 report for 2024 recorded a slightly higher total of 5,417 AP mines destroyed – 695 conventional mines and 4,722 improvised mines.⁷²

SURVEY IN 2024

DMAC reported that IPs conducted village-by-village survey in 14 provinces and completed the survey of 45 districts in 2024. The survey found 52 previously unrecorded conventional AP mined areas (recorded as hazardous area, HAs) covering 2.9km² and 114 improvised mine "HAs" covering 2.5km².⁷³

NTS resulted in release of a total of 39km², according to official data (see Table 9). This included 28km² that DMAC reported was cancelled by its staff conducting assessments to confirm survey reports of hazardous areas that lacked direct evidence or were located in areas not linked to military activity.⁷⁴

Table 9: Release of AP mined areas through NTS in 2024 (DMAC data)

Operator	Legacy AP mines (m ²)	Improvised AP mines (m ²)	Total area released (m ²)
DAFA	9,320	114,106	123,426
DRC	1,556,971	377,836	1,934,807
DMAC	800,000	27,206,884	28,006,884
HALO	1,143,483	581,382	1,724,865
MCPA	5,283,542	1,742,877	7,026,419
OMAR	4,868	309,875	314,743
Totals	8,798,184	30,332,960	39,131,144

However, DMAC's data indicated IPs cancelled 11km² through NTS in 2024, half the amount recorded by the six IPs that provided details of their operations to Mine Action Review (see Table 10). They reported cancelling 5.8km² of suspected improvised mine hazards and nearly 17km² of suspected legacy mine contamination, including 10km² reportedly

cancelled by OMAR in the course of implementing two contracts, one from the PM/WRA and a second from the UN. IPs also reported reduction through technical survey (TS) of nearly 2km² in 2024 compared with reduction of 0.2km² recorded by DMAC.⁷⁵

Table 10: Release of AP mined area through NTS in 2024 (IP data)

Operator	Legacy AP mines (m ²)	Improvised mines (m ²)	All mined area combined (m ²)
ATC	382,643	765	383,408
DAFA	0	1,039	1,039
DRC	635,112	1,299,937	1,935,049
HALO	380,157	2,783,920	3,164,077
MCPA	5,457,290	1,739,026	7,196,316
OMAR	10,095,186	12,205	10,095,186
Totals	16,950,388	5,836,892	22,775,075

CLEARANCE IN 2024

DMAC and IP data largely align on clearance of AP mines totalling a little over 10km² in 2024 (see Tables 11 and 12), down 28% from the previous year's official total.⁷⁶ IPs foresaw a further steep decline in 2025 following the loss of funding from the US and other donors.

⁷⁰ Email from Aimal Safi, DMAC, 26 March 2025.

⁷¹ Ibid.

⁷² Article 7 Report (covering 2024), Form F.

⁷³ Ibid. The survey also recorded 170 AV mined areas covering 11km² and 40 areas contaminated by ERW covering 11.75km².

⁷⁴ Email from Aimal Safi, DMAC, 16 July 2025.

⁷⁵ Emails from Farid Elmi, ATC, 8 July 2025; Hannah Rose Holloway, DRC, 1 May 2025; Yoshiyuki Shiomi, FSD, 25 March 2025; Farid Homyoun, HALO, 16 April 2025; Mir Mohammad, MCPA, 27 March 2025; and Abid K. Fazel, OMAR, 28 March 2025.

⁷⁶ Email from Aimal Safi, DMAC, 26 March 2025.

The 2024 total included 6.75km² of area containing improvised mines, a small increase on the previous year's result and reflecting the priority given to clearance of these hazards. HALO, while reducing staff in response to funding cuts, maintained its capacity to deal with improvised mines.⁷⁷ The progress of clearance, however, has seen a decline in the number of improvised mines destroyed – from 1,590 in 2023 (DMAC data) to 1,086.

Table 11: Clearance of improvised mines in 2024 (DMAC data)

Operator	Province/district	Area cleared (m ²)	Improvised mines destroyed
ATC	Maydan Wardak/Central/Saidabad	10,011	0
DAFA	Hilmand, Kandahar, Kunduz, Logar	240,174	49
DRC	Hilmand- Nangarhar	986,715	61
HALO	Ghazni, Ghor, Hilmand, Kandahar, Uruzgan, Zabul	5,239,626	870
MCPA	Kunduz, Laghman, Nangarhar	135,818	52
OMAR	Baghlan, Kunduz	80,462	54
SADC	Balkh	2,338	0
Totals		6,695,144	1,086

Clearance of legacy/conventional AP mines dropped sharply to 3.7km², less than half the level recorded by DMAC in 2023. DRC and HALO deployed more capacity to tackle unexploded ordnance (UXO) as well as improvised mine clearance to deal with the type of explosive ordnance causing the most casualties.⁷⁸ OMAR also focused on battle area clearance but undertook AP mine clearance in Kunar province with funding from the UN.⁷⁹

Table 12: Legacy AP mine clearance in 2024 (DMAC data)

Operator	Province/district	Area cleared (m ²)	AP mines destroyed
ATC	Baghlan, Maydan Wardak	867,543	15
DAFA	Faryab, Kabul	183,467	3
DRC	Kabul	15,735	0
FSD	Kunduz	212,651	118
HALO	Ghazni, Kabul	35,722	10
MCPA	Khost, Kunduz	2,454	2
MDC	Herat	1,347,517	86
OMAR	Baghlan, Kunar	1,079,982	67
Totals		3,745,071	301

DEMINER SAFETY

Two HALO deminers clearing improvised mines in Uruzgan province were killed by an uncontrolled detonation in May 2024 believed to have been initiated by a deminer stepping on a pressure plate. HALO's investigation found failings in planning, command and control, and adherence to SOPs, following which it conducted a review of safety procedures.⁸⁰

A DRC deminer suffered injury leading to a below-the-knee amputation after detonation of a PMN-2 AP mine on the access path to a task in Kabul province in October 2024. Investigation found that the Task Implementation Plan did not take account of heavy rainfall identified in NTS of the site and which likely caused migration of the mine onto the access route, which had been frequently used (and as a result was not cleared before clearance started).⁸¹

⁷⁷ Email from Farid Homayoun, HALO, 16 April 2025.

⁷⁸ Emails from Hannah Rose Holloway, DRC, 1 May 2025; and Farid Homayoun, HALO, 16 April 2025.

⁷⁹ Email from Abid K. Fazel, OMAR, 28 March 2025.

⁸⁰ Email from Farid Homayoun, HALO, 16 April 2025.

⁸¹ Email from Hannah Rose Holloway, DRC, 1 May 2025.

ARTICLE 5 DEADLINE AND COMPLIANCE



Under the Article 5 deadline extension request granted at the Fifth Review Conference in November 2024 Afghanistan is required to destroy all AP mines in mined areas under its jurisdiction or control as soon as possible, but not later than 1 March 2030.

Afghanistan's extension request aimed to complete clearance of all explosive ordnance in five years at a total cost of \$256 million.⁸² It underscored the Taliban authorities' commitment to compliance with the APMBC but the targets set for the MAPA, which is almost totally dependent on international donor support, bore little relation to the prevailing financial environment. Prospects for completing clearance were slim even when DMAC estimated mine contamination at 176km². Since then, the estimate has increased to 182km² (see Table 1) and the extension request acknowledges a "high possibility" of finding more hazardous areas,⁸³ while donor support has declined even further.

The extension request work plan called for deploying 472 teams for survey, clearance, and risk education in 2025–26, the first year of the extension period, including 333 teams for clearing all forms of mines, dropping to a total of 261 teams in the fifth year.⁸⁴ These totals are far in excess of available capacity. DMAC reported a total of 285 teams operating at the end of 2024, including 123 demining teams and further steep cuts have occurred in 2025 as a result of US and other donor cuts.⁸⁵

By July 2025, the number of active teams had fallen to 188, of which 132 conducted clearance of all forms of EO.⁸⁶

Afghanistan's third request states that "it would be very challenging or impossible" to consider Afghanistan's AP mined area in isolation from other explosive ordnance, reflecting the higher threat posed by other ordnance types. The operation would also include re-survey and clearance of 38 remaining former NATO firing ranges.⁸⁷ After decades of demining, remaining areas contaminated by conventional AP mines are increasingly in remote, often mountainous locations. UXO accounted for 91% of casualties in 2024 while improvised mines, though affecting a much smaller area, caused as many casualties as conventional mines.⁸⁸

Table 13: Five-year summary of AP mine clearance⁸⁹

Year	Area cleared (km ²)
2024	10.44
2023	14.47
2022	13.85
2021	17.71
2020	24.24
Total	80.71

PLANNING FOR MANAGEMENT OF RESIDUAL CONTAMINATION

Afghanistan's mine action plans do not yet address management of residual contamination.

⁸² The request envisages expenditure of \$200.5 million on clearance, \$12.5 million on survey, \$7.1 million on risk education, and \$15 million on victim assistance. Also included are the costs of coordination (\$17.5 million), equipment (\$2.8 million), and "development" (\$0.5 million).

⁸³ 2024 Article 5 deadline Extension Request, p. 76.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 65–66.

⁸⁵ Email from Aimal Safi, DMAC, 26 March 2025.

⁸⁶ UNMAS, MAPA team location July 2025.

⁸⁷ 2024 Article 5 deadline Extension Request, pp. iii and 58–60.

⁸⁸ UNMAS Afghanistan Monthly update, February 2025.

⁸⁹ Clearance of conventional and improvised AP mines reported by six implementing partners totalled 30.38km² in 2022 and 21.1km² in 2023, which would raise the five-year total to 103.87km².