

KEY DATA

CLUSTER MUNITION CONTAMINATION: LIGHT

NATIONAL AUTHORITY ESTIMATE

3.74 km²

SUBMUNITION
CLEARANCE IN 2023

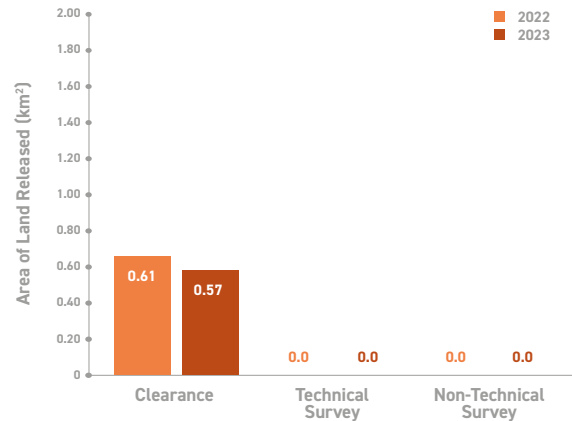
0.57 km²

SUBMUNITIONS
DESTROYED IN 2023

511

(INCLUDING 5 DESTROYED
DURING EOD SPOT TASKS)

LAND RELEASE OUTPUT



KEY DEVELOPMENTS

Tajikistan's clearance output decreased slightly in 2023 compared to the previous year. The national authority estimate of total contamination from cluster munition remnants (CMR) decreased slightly to 3.74km² from the 4.04km² estimated at the end of 2022. Tajikistan plans to complete all necessary survey to finally establish a baseline of CMR contamination by the end of 2025.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ACTION

- Tajikistan should accede to the Convention on Cluster Munitions (CCM) as a matter of priority.
- Tajikistan should comply with its obligations under international human rights law to clear CMR on territory under its jurisdiction or control as soon as possible.
- The Tajikistan National Mine Action Center (TNMAC) should seek to confirm the extent of remaining CMR contamination and ensure timely clearance and release of the contaminated areas.

CLUSTER MUNITION SURVEY AND CLEARANCE CAPACITY

MANAGEMENT

- Commission for the Implementation of International Humanitarian Law (CIHHL)
- Tajikistan National Mine Action Center (TNMAC)

NATIONAL OPERATORS

- Union of Sappers Tajikistan (UST)
- Ministry of Defence – Humanitarian Demining Company (HDC)
- Border Guard Forces of Tajikistan

INTERNATIONAL OPERATORS

- Norwegian People's Aid (NPA)
- Swiss Foundation for Mine Action (FSD)

OTHER ACTORS

- Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining (GICHD)
- Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE)

UNDERSTANDING OF CMR CONTAMINATION

Tajikistan has a CMR problem that TNMAC estimates is in 16 confirmed hazardous areas (CHAs) covering a total of 3.74km² (see Table 1).¹ Tajikistan reports no suspected hazardous areas (SHAs). TNMAC's current estimate of contamination is a decrease on the 4.03km² reported for the end of 2022² but still significantly higher than the 1.86km² identified by TNMAC at the end of 2021.³ The significant increase in 2022 was the result of nine battle areas being confirmed as containing CMR, adding a total area of 2.67km² to the national database in 2022.⁴ A total of 0.22km² of previously unrecorded CMR contamination was added to the database in 2023.⁵

Tajikistan's CMR contamination is largely concentrated in central areas of the country,⁶ spread across two of Tajikistan's

four regions. The largest concentrations (almost 40% and 38%, respectively) are in Rasht in the Districts of Republican Subordination (DRS) region and in the mountainous district of Darvoz in the Gorno-Badakhshan Autonomous (GBAO) region (also sometimes referred to a VKMB). The remainder (almost 23%) is in Vahdat, also in the DRS region.⁷ Tajikistan plans to finish surveying all explosive ordnance contamination by the end of 2025 in the districts of Darvoz, Rasht, and Vahdat where cluster munition-contaminated areas have continued to be identified.⁸

Contamination data are disaggregated by weapon type in the national database, with CMR disaggregated from other explosive remnants of war (ERW).⁹

Table 1: Cluster munition-contaminated area (at end 2023) (National Authority estimate)¹⁰

Region	District	CHAs	Area (m ²)
GBAO	Darvoz	5	1,404,463
DRS	Rasht	6	1,479,900
DRS	Vahdat	5	856,133
Totals		16	3,740,496

Tajikistan traces its CMR contamination back to the civil war of 1992–97 but has not clarified who was responsible for using cluster munitions.¹¹ Most submunitions being cleared are Soviet-era AO 2.5RT/RTM type.¹² SHOAB-0.5 submunitions have also been found.¹³

Tajikistan faces several challenges in determining an accurate baseline of CMR contamination. Owing to a lack of nationwide survey, Tajikistan has no recorded SHAs and continues to discover areas of contamination for which no previous information exists.¹⁴ As the Union of Sappers Tajikistan (UST) notes that cluster munitions were used without documentation. As such, non-technical survey (NTS) teams are investing effort into finding former military

personnel and other informants who were involved in the civil war and can help survey teams build a picture of likely contamination. Information about previously unknown areas of contamination also comes from explosive accidents, such as the one in 2021 involving two civilians and the explosion of a SHOAB-0.5 cluster bomb in the Romit Gorge in Vahdat district. This prompted survey and eventually led to confirmation of a previously unrecorded total of 1.74km² of cluster munition-contaminated area.¹⁵ Tajikistan's terrain can present a challenge to determining an accurate baseline of contamination in a given area. Mudslides, landslides, avalanches, and rockfalls can cause submunitions to move or become more deeply buried.¹⁶

OTHER EXPLOSIVE REMNANTS OF WAR AND LANDMINES

Tajikistan is also contaminated with anti-personnel mines. See Mine Action Review's *Clearing the Mines* reports on Tajikistan for further information.

1 Emails from Muhabbat Ibrohimzoda, Director, TNMAC, 15 April and 23 July 2024.

2 Email from Muhabbat Ibrohimzoda, TNMAC, 31 March 2023.

3 Email from Muhabbat Ibrohimzoda, TNMAC, 19 June 2022.

4 Email from Muhabbat Ibrohimzoda, TNMAC, 31 March 2023.

5 Emails from Muhabbat Ibrohimzoda, TNMAC, 15 April 2024; and Faiz Mohammad Paktian, Country Director, Norwegian People's Aid (NPA), 6 May 2024.

6 "Tajikistan's Mine Action Programme: Overview of Remaining Challenges and Needs", Presentation at Individualised Approach Meeting, Twenty-First Meeting of States Parties to the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention (APMBC) (21MSP), Geneva, 21 November 2023.

7 Email from Muhabbat Ibrohimzoda, TNMAC, 15 April 2024.

8 Ibid.

9 Email from Muhabbat Ibrohimzoda, TNMAC, 16 June 2023.

10 Email from Muhabbat Ibrohimzoda, TNMAC, 15 April 2024.

11 Statement of Tajikistan, APMBC Fourteenth Meeting of States Parties, Geneva, 1 December 2015.

12 Email from Melissa Andersson, Country Director, NPA, 29 April 2020.

13 Email from Saynurridin Kalandarov, Director, Union of Sappers Tajikistan (UST), 14 April 2023.

14 Email from Muhabbat Ibrohimzoda, TNMAC, 31 March 2023.

15 Email from Saynurridin Kalandarov, UST, 14 April 2023.

16 Presentation by Muhabbat Ibrohimzoda, TNMAC, APMBC Intersessional Meetings, Geneva, 22 June 2022; and email from Saynurridin Kalandarov, UST, 14 April 2023.

NATIONAL OWNERSHIP AND PROGRAMME MANAGEMENT

The Commission for the Implementation of International Humanitarian Law (CIIHL), chaired by the First Deputy Prime Minister, and comprising senior representatives from relevant line ministries, acts as Tajikistan's national mine action authority, responsible for mainstreaming mine action in the government's socio-economic development policies.¹⁷

TNMAC is the executive arm of CIIHL and the body coordinating mine action, responsible for accreditation, risk management, issuing task orders, information management, quality assurance (QA), and quality control (QC).¹⁸ It was set up by government decree in 2014, replacing the Tajikistan Mine Action Centre and assuming responsibility for the transition to a fully nationally-owned programme.¹⁹ Tajikistan's Parliament adopted a Law on Humanitarian Mine Action in 2016.²⁰ The Ministry of Defence (MoD) plays a significant role in the mine actor sector through the Humanitarian Demining Company (HDC), the biggest national operator, which is funded by the United States (US)²¹ and the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE).²²

The Government of Tajikistan and TNMAC are enabling and highly supportive of mine action activities in the country. This includes the granting of visas, concluding memoranda of understanding with operators, facilitating imports, granting access to border-detached areas that require special permissions and involving operators in decisions as and when needed.²³

National funding has remained modest but consistent in recent years. In 2023, the Tajik government provided modest funding for mine action, including US\$480,000 for "technical and non-technical assistance" (the same level of funding provided in 2022) to facilitate the implementation of the Tajikistan's obligations under the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention (APMBC). A further US\$56,710 (the same amount as in 2022), was allocated to support operational mine action.²⁴ TNMAC reports that, as Tajikistan

has not yet adhered to the CCM, no separate funding was allocated specifically for survey and clearance of cluster munition-contaminated area in Tajikistan in 2023, as has been the case in previous years.²⁵ It has been suggested that, given that the Tajikistan's mine action programme has only a few donors, more effective efforts are needed to engage donors.²⁶

TNMAC regularly receives support on topics such as information management and implementation of Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention (APMBC) Article 5 from the Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining (GICHD).²⁷ In 2023, the OSCE continued to provide capacity development support to the national authorities, including capacity building for the MoD Officers of the Regional Explosive Hazards Training Centre.²⁸ US Central Command also delivered training in the International Mine Action Standards (IMAS) to the Centre.²⁹

Norwegian People's Aid (NPA) does not have a formal capacity development agreement with TNMAC but assists informally with activities upon request.³⁰ In February 2023, NPA provided medical training for staff from NPA and other demining organisations in Tajikistan.³¹ Also in 2023, NPA was engaged with TNMAC on work to improve operational efficiency, for example, increasing the use of targeted technical survey (TTS) as well as improving national standards and standard operating procedures (SOPs).³²

Monthly technical co-ordination meetings continued in 2023.³³ Issues discussed include technical matters and challenges and support needs.³⁴ An annual meeting also takes place, under the auspices of the CIIHL, that focuses on TNMAC reporting on progress in and challenges to implementation of Tajikistan's commitments under the APMBC.³⁵ The last annual meeting at the time of writing took place in December 2023. It has been suggested that more discussion on funding at these meetings would be beneficial given the small number of donors to Tajikistan's mine action programme.³⁶

17 2019 APMBC Article 5 deadline Extension Request, p. 20.

18 Ibid., pp. 20–21; and "Tajikistan Mine Action Programme General Land Release Operational Plan for October 2023 to December 2025", p. 9.

19 2019 APMBC Article 5 deadline Extension Request, p. 1.

20 Ibid., pp. 20–21.

21 Ibid., p. 23.

22 Email from Saodat Asadova, National Programme Officer, OSCE, 10 June 2024.

23 Emails from Faiz Mohammad Paktian, NPA, 6 May 2024; Saodat Asadova, OSCE, 9 April 2024; and Nickhwah Din Mohammed, Country Director, FSD, 24 March 2023.

24 Emails from Muhabbat Ibrohimzoda, TNMAC, 31 March 2023 and 15 April 2024.

25 Emails from Muhabbat Ibrohimzoda, TNMAC, 15 April 2024.

26 Email from Faiz Mohammad Paktian, NPA, 6 May 2024.

27 Email from Muhabbat Ibrohimzoda, TNMAC, 15 April 2024.

28 Email from Saodat Asadova, OSCE, 9 April 2024.

29 "To Walk the Earth in Safety, 23rd Edition, Fiscal Year 2023, Documenting the U.S. Commitment to Conventional Weapons Destruction", Bureau of Political-Military Affairs, US Department of State, at: <https://bit.ly/3wVINKT>, p. 58.

30 Emails from Melissa Andersson, NPA, 21 May 2022 and 29 March 2023.

31 Email from Melissa Andersson, NPA, 29 March 2023.

32 Email from Faiz Mohammad Paktian, NPA, 6 May 2024.

33 Emails from Muhabbat Ibrohimzoda, TNMAC, 15 April 2024; Saodat Asadova, OSCE, 9 April 2024; Nickhwah Din Mohammed, FSD, 15 April 2024; Faiz Mohammad Paktian, NPA, 6 May 2024; and Saynurridin Kalandarov, UST, 7 May 2024.

34 Email from Saodat Asadova, OSCE, 9 April 2024.

35 Ibid.

36 Email from Faiz Mohammad Paktian, NPA, 6 May 2024.

GENDER AND DIVERSITY

TNMAC adopted a gender programme in October 2018 that was prepared by the GICHD Gender and Mine Action Programme (GMAP) and is said to be committed to improving the situation of women in the mine action sector.³⁷ With the assistance of the GICHD, gender and diversity issues were integrated into Tajikistan's national mine action strategy, updated to cover the period from 2021 to 2030, with annual plans also addressing the issues.³⁸ Tajikistan claims that gender is mainstreamed in all aspects of their mine action programme,³⁹ which is underpinned by Tajikistan's legislation on gender equality, its National Development Strategy to 2030, and other key national programme and strategy documents.⁴⁰ NPA and TNMAC revived meetings of a gender working group in 2020, which met twice annually in 2021 and 2022.⁴¹ Although it did not meet in 2023, NPA has persuaded TNMAC to reinstate them, with technical support from NPA as needed.⁴² Relevant mine action data continue to be disaggregated by sex and age.⁴³

TNMAC asserts that both men and women with relevant work experience and qualifications in demining have equal access to employment in the sector in Tajikistan.⁴⁴ However, TNMAC also acknowledges that it is challenging to achieve gender balance in view of the predominance of men in the military, where service is compulsory for men and voluntary for women.⁴⁵ In 2023, only 27% of TNMAC's staff were women although 30% of managerial or supervisory positions were occupied by women. This is a decrease on the 38% of managerial or supervisory positions occupied by women in 2022, though the actual number of women in such positions remained the same. As in 2022, no women were employed in operational positions in TNMAC in 2023.⁴⁶ No women were employed by MoD's HDC in either operational or managerial/supervisory positions in 2023 or in the two years before.⁴⁷

Table 2: Gender composition of operators in 2023⁴⁸

Organisation	Total staff	Total women staff	Total managerial or supervisory staff	Total women in managerial or supervisory positions	Total operational staff	Total women in operational positions
TNMAC	26	7 (27%)	10	3 (30%)	14	0 (0%)
NPA	81	12 (15%)	12	6 (50%)	60	12 (20%)
FSD	16	4 (25%)	2	1 (50%)	9	3 (33%)
UST	54	0 (0%)	5	0 (0%)	54	0 (0%)
MoD HDC	117	0 (0%)	15	0 (0%)	84	0 (0%)
Totals	294	23 (8%)	42	10 (24%)	221	15 (7%)

The OSCE emphasises the importance of gender mainstreaming and balance throughout project implementation and had a Gender Strategy and Action Plan in place for 2021–23⁴⁹ and an updated one to cover 2024–26 was in development at the time of writing.⁵⁰ The OSCE also insists that a module on gender and human rights be included in all pre-season basic training of demining teams, in accordance with International Mine Action Standards (IMAS).⁵¹

NPA has integrated a gender and diversity policy into its Tajikistan operations⁵² and had a gender equality implementation plan in place for 2024.⁵³ The total number of women employed by NPA fell slightly in 2023 compared to 2022, from 20% to 15%, and the proportion of operational positions filled by women from 20% to 13%. However, in management or supervisory positions the proportion increased significantly: from 29% to 50%.⁵⁴ In 2023, NPA adopted an initiative with local women's associations to

37 Email from Muhabbat Ibrohimzoda, TNMAC, 14 June 2019.

38 Emails from Melissa Andersson, NPA, 21 May 2022; and Muhabbat Ibrohimzoda, TNMAC, 19 June 2022.

39 APMBC Committee on the Implementation of Article 5, Preliminary Observations on Tajikistan, Intersessional meetings, Geneva, 20–22 June 2022.

40 Email from Muhabbat Ibrohimzoda, TNMAC, 15 April 2024.

41 Emails from Melissa Andersson, NPA, 21 April and 4 July 2021, 21 May 2022, and 29 March 2023; and Muhabbat Ibrohimzoda, TNMAC, 19 June 2022 and 31 March 2023.

42 Email from Faiz Mohammad Paktian, NPA, 6 May 2024.

43 Email from Muhabbat Ibrohimzoda, TNMAC, 31 March 2023.

44 Email from Muhabbat Ibrohimzoda, TNMAC, 15 April 2024.

45 2019 APMBC Article 5 deadline Extension Request, Additional Information received 3 August 2019.

46 Emails from Muhabbat Ibrohimzoda, TNMAC, 31 March 2023 and 15 April 2024.

47 Emails from Saodat Asadova, OSCE, 3 June 2022; and Muhabbat Ibrohimzoda, TNMAC, 16 June 2023 and 23 July 2024.

48 Emails from Muhabbat Ibrohimzoda, TNMAC, 15 April and 23 July 2024; Nickwah Din Mohammed, FSD, 15 April 2024; Saynurridin Kalandarov, UST, 7 May 2024; and Faiz Mohammad Paktian, NPA, 6 May 2024.

49 Email from Saodat Asadova, OSCE, 9 April 2024.

50 Email from Saodat Asadova, OSCE, 29 May 2024.

51 Emails from Saodat Asadova, OSCE, 9 April 2024; and interview with Saodat Asadova, OSCE, 24 June 2022, Geneva.

52 Email from Melissa Andersson, NPA, 21 April 2020.

53 Email from Faiz Mohammad Paktian, NPA, 6 May 2024.

54 Emails from Melissa Andersson, NPA, 29 March, 4 May, and 23 May 2023; and Faiz Mohammad Paktian, NPA, 6 May 2024.

attract female deminers, the first time such an initiative has been undertaken in Tajikistan. Outcomes were positive and NPA believes that the initiative could serve as a good example for adoption by other mine action partners in Tajikistan.

While focused on CMR clearance in 2023, when NPA does conduct survey and impact assessment activities, it uses gender-mixed teams to help ensure sure that community liaison activities are gender inclusive.⁵⁵ NPA has stated that while ethnic groupings are not as pronounced in Tajikistan as they are in some other contexts, to the extent it is relevant community liaison teams take this into consideration when conducting their work.⁵⁶ Its programme introduced a new gender and diversity focal point into the team in 2023.⁵⁷

FSD employs a diverse workforce in Tajikistan in line with its Gender, Diversity and Inclusion policy. In 2023, one quarter of FSD's staff in Tajikistan were women (the same proportion as in 2022), although the proportion of both management or

supervisory positions and operational positions occupied by women increased slightly.⁵⁸ FSD ensures its NTS teams visiting mine-affected communities consult with all groups, including women, children and ethnic minorities, to ensure their needs are taken into account in FSD's survey and clearance. FSD disaggregates relevant mine action data by sex and age.⁵⁹

UST has a gender and diversity policy and says it supports equal access to employment for qualified women and men in UST survey and clearance teams in Tajikistan, including for managerial/supervisory positions, but does not yet employ any women among its 54 staff. Although survey teams are not yet mixed gender, UST does consult all groups during survey and community liaison activities, including women and children, the elderly, and representatives from ethnic or minority groups. Survey data are disaggregated by sex and age.⁶⁰

ENVIRONMENTAL POLICIES AND ACTION

Environmental concerns and climate resilience are becoming increasingly pertinent for mine action in Tajikistan, as changes to weather patterns, including both extreme heat and early snow, and heavy rainfall, continue to negatively impact the nine-month window for demining operations.⁶¹ TNMAC states that environmental issues are taken into consideration during survey and clearance to ensure that operations are conducted without negative environmental impact and that hazardous areas released and handed over to communities in a state suitable for intended use.⁶² Environmental assessments are said to be conducted to support the planning and implementation of survey and clearance.⁶³

Clearance is undertaken according to Tajikistan's national mine action standards (NMAS), which contain a chapter on the environment, health, and safety. This chapter covers issues such as safeguarding of the environment during the establishment and removal of worksites and accommodation, waste disposal, air quality, water supply, as well as the recording and reporting of environmental "incidents".⁶⁴ Based on the NMAS, TNMAC continuously monitors the demining activities of all operators to assess environmental implications and environmental protection requirements. In any cases of violations or poor practice, corrective and

preventive measures are undertaken.⁶⁵ Tajikistan does not have an environmental management policy for mine action but a 2011 law on environmental protection and other regulatory documents define the legal basis for all state policy on the environment.⁶⁶

In October 2023, a one-day workshop on environmental protection and climate change resilience was held, led by NPA and with 50 participants from mine action partners, including the OSCE, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), and the Committee for Environmental Protection under the Government of Tajikistan. Action points were agreed and NPA committed to follow up on these with TNMAC and other mine action stakeholders during 2024.⁶⁷ Such action points included the establishment of an environmental working group, revision of the NMAS in light of the updated IMAS 07.13 on Environmental Management in Mine Action, revision of monitoring SOPs to integrate IMAS and NMAS requirements on environmental protection, increased inclusion of environmental issues in planning and prioritisation, the establishment of a waste management and recycling system, greenhouse gas reduction measures, and various energy, water and resource saving measures.⁶⁸

55 Email from Faiz Mohammad Paktian, NPA, 6 May 2024.

56 Emails from Melissa Andersson, NPA, 21 May 2022 and 29 March 2023.

57 Email from Faiz Mohammad Paktian, NPA, 6 May 2024.

58 Emails from Nickhwah Din Mohammed, FSD, 24 March and 23 April 2023 and 15 April 2024.

59 Email from Nickhwah Din Mohammed, FSD, 15 April 2024.

60 Emails from Saynurridin Katandarov, UST, 14 April 2023 and 7 May 2024.

61 Interview with Faiz Mohammad Paktian, Tajikistan, NPA, 21 November 2023. Geneva.

62 Email from Muhabbat Ibrohimzoda, TNMAC, 19 June 2022.

63 Email from Muhabbat Ibrohimzoda, TNMAC, 15 April 2024.

64 Emails from Saodat Asadova, OSCE, 3 and 9 June 2022; and Muhabbat Ibrohimzoda, TNMAC, 19 June 2022; and NMAS Chapter 20: "Environment, Health and Safety".

65 Email from Muhabbat Ibrohimzoda, TNMAC, 15 April 2024.

66 Emails from Muhabbat Ibrohimzoda, TNMAC, 31 March 2023 and 15 April 2024.

67 Emails from Muhabbat Ibrohimzoda, TNMAC, 15 April 2024; and Faiz Mohammad Paktian, NPA, 6 May 2024.

68 Email from Faiz Mohammad Paktian, NPA, 29 May 2024.

NPA has an environmental SOP and an annual action plan linked to its environmental policy.⁶⁹ In 2023, NPA Tajikistan conducted a baseline assessment of its environmental footprint using the NPA Green Office Tool, aligned with NPA's global environmental policy. Consequently, NPA Tajikistan revised its environmental policy and produced an environmental plan for 2024. Environmental actions undertaken in 2023 included tree-planting, reducing vehicle use, and staff training and awareness raising.⁷⁰ While NPA does not yet conduct environmental assessments to support the planning and delivery of survey and clearance tasks, NPA does consider climate-related and extreme weather risks when planning and prioritising survey and clearance. This includes assessing the potential impact of the increased risk of flooding, which could cause operations to stand down or potentially displace landmines or people into contaminated areas.⁷¹

FSD has an environmental policy and SOP at its headquarters and was due to begin the ISO 14001 accreditation process in 2023.⁷² As at May 2024, this process was ongoing and

FSD had updated its environmental policy in line with requirements and prepared the first draft of the complete FSD Environmental Management System.⁷³ Refresher training on the SOP and FSD's organisational level commitments to sound environmental practices takes place each year with all management and operational staff, following the winter stand-down period. FSD conducts environmental assessments to support the planning and delivery of survey and clearance tasks and considers climate-related or extreme weather risks when planning and prioritising activities.⁷⁴ Alongside its demining activities, FSD is undertaking a separate project to remediate polluted soil in areas contaminated by Soviet-era toxic pesticides (persistent organic pollutants, or POPs).⁷⁵

UST has an SOP on environmental protection based on Tajikistan's NMAS, which has been approved by TNMAC.⁷⁶ After leaving field camps or completing operations, UST buries waste, excluding metal and plastic materials.⁷⁷

INFORMATION MANAGEMENT AND REPORTING

TNMAC uses the Information Management System for Mine Action (IMSMA) Core to maintain its national database.⁷⁸ The system is based on ArcGIS technology for real-time monitoring of the progress, prioritisation, and efficiency of all humanitarian mine action interventions.⁷⁹ Data are disaggregated by weapon type and method of land release in the national database.⁸⁰ NPA confirms that the data collection forms introduced and updated by TNMAC in 2020–21 are consistent and enable efficient collection of data.⁸¹

Both the database and the information management activities of TNMAC are operating well, with progress

and other reports from the field received daily, as well as cross-checking by TNMAC of the data.⁸² Tajikistan's General Land Release Operations Plan sets out clear guidelines for operators on the required content and timelines for all types of operational reports to be sent to TNMAC on a daily, weekly, monthly and as-needed basis.⁸³ TNMAC regularly receives support on information management through online consultations with the GICHD. In 2024, TNMAC planned to use the Survey123 software programme to introduce a new form for monitoring ordnance destruction and warehouse storage of explosives.⁸⁴

PLANNING AND TASKING

TNMAC has submitted an evidence-based, costed, and time-bound mine action strategy for 2021–30 and an action plan for its implementation, both of which have been approved by the government.⁸⁵ However, as Tajikistan has not yet adhered to the CCM, the problem of cluster munitions is

not integrated into its national mine action strategy. TNMAC does, however include instructions regarding CMR when tasking demining operators with survey and clearance.⁸⁶

TNMAC does not have an annual work plan specifically for the survey and clearance of cluster munition-contaminated

69 Email from Melissa Andersson, NPA, 21 May 2022.

70 Emails from Faiz Mohammad Paktian, NPA, 6 and 29 May 2024.

71 Ibid.

72 Email from Nickwah Din Mohammed, FSD, 24 March 2023.

73 Email from Nickwah Din Mohammed, FSD, 29 May 2024.

74 Email from Nickwah Din Mohammed, FSD, 24 March 2023.

75 "Tajikistan", FSD website, accessed 25 March 2024 at: <https://bit.ly/3Ozn7hh>.

76 Email from Saynurridin Kalandarov, UST, 14 April 2023.

77 Email from Saynurridin Kalandarov, UST, 7 May 2024.

78 Email from Muhabbat Ibrohimzoda, TNMAC, 28 May 2020; and APMB Committee on the Implementation of Article 5, Preliminary Observations on Tajikistan, Intersessional meetings, Geneva, 20–22 June 2022.

79 "Tajikistan's Mine Action Programme: Overview of Remaining Challenges and Needs", Individualised Approach Meeting, 21MSP, Geneva, 21 November 2023.

80 Email from Muhabbat Ibrohimzoda, Director, TNMAC, 16 June 2023.

81 Emails from Melissa Andersson, NPA, 21 May 2022 and 29 March 2023.

82 Emails from Muhabbat Ibrohimzoda, TNMAC, 15 April 2024; and Saynurridin Kalandarov, UST, 7 May 2024.

83 Tajikistan Mine Action Programme General Land Release Operational Plan for October 2023 to December 2025, pp. 4–5.

84 Email from Muhabbat Ibrohimzoda, TNMAC, 15 April 2024.

85 Emails from Muhabbat Ibrohimzoda, TNMAC, 22 April 2021 and 7 July 2022.

86 Emails from Muhabbat Ibrohimzoda, TNMAC, 31 March 2023 and 15 April 2024.

areas. However, Tajikistan's General Land Release Operations Plan for 2023 does outline the list of remaining confirmed battle areas, including those containing CMR.⁸⁷ TNMAC states that, once planned surveys are completed by the end of 2025, a plan will be put in place for the phased clearance of CMR and specific deadlines for land release will be set.⁸⁸

Currently, land release tasks, including cluster munition-contaminated areas, are prioritised by TNMAC through application of Tajikistan's SOP 1.2 (Planning and Tasking of Mine Action Operations), taking into consideration the following criteria:

- Government and local authority requests
- Donor requirements
- The area's status in relation to the district-by-district approach

- Distance of the task site from populated areas
- The need to complete any previously suspended areas
- Altitude of the task site
- The local security situation (permission from the Border Forces).⁸⁹

Operators report that task dossiers are issued in a timely matter by TNMAC.⁹⁰ NPA is tasked by TNMAC after discussions that take into account humanitarian impact, national planning priorities, and seasonal access constraints.⁹¹ CMR-contaminated sites tasked to NPA in 2023 were in areas that attract many tourists from Dushanbe. No CMR tasks have been assigned to NPA for 2024 owing to a decision by TNMAC to prioritise mine clearance.⁹²

LAND RELEASE SYSTEM

STANDARDS AND LAND RELEASE EFFICIENCY

Tajikistan's revised NMAS were approved in April 2017. The standards, which have been translated into Russian and English⁹³ are reviewed annually. SOPs are reviewed in accordance with the designated accreditation period. In 2023, Tajikistan updated the NMAS in the chapters on Marking, Medical Support, Land Release, Battle Area Clearance (BAC), Safety, and quality management (QM). In addition, all implementing partners updated their SOPs, according to the NMAS.⁹⁴ TNMAC states that when any updates to the NMAS or SOPs are made, this is undertaken in consultation with clearance operators.⁹⁵

Operators report that Tajikistan's NMAS are appropriately adapted to the local threat and enable effective, efficient, and safe survey and clearance work.⁹⁶ In 2023, FSD suggested a minor improvement would be to increase provision for casualty evacuation and medical evacuation when teams are working at high altitude in remote areas.⁹⁷ TNMAC has subsequently reassured operators that, should it ever be necessary, personnel would be evacuated to Dushanbe by military helicopter, with fuel costs to be met by the operator.⁹⁸

NPA updated its SOPs relating to its marking systems and excavation in 2023. The updates were made in consultation with other operators, to ensure alignment with best practice and the sector standards.⁹⁹

OPERATORS AND OPERATIONAL TOOLS

All teams deployed for CMR in Tajikistan in 2023 were multi-task teams (MTTs), capable of survey and clearance but deployed only for clearance and, in the cases of FSD and NPA, EOD also (see Table 3). There were no significant changes in the number of personnel deployed by national operators for CMR in 2023, nor were any significant changes expected for 2024.¹⁰⁰

NPA remains the only international operator undertaking CMR clearance in Tajikistan, with MTTs capable of conducting both mine and BAC and engaged in conducting CMR clearance at some point during the year in conjunction with other mine clearance tasks.¹⁰¹ NPA maintained the same operational capacity in 2023 as it had deployed in 2022, but expected a decrease from five teams to four in 2024, due to a funding shortfall. However, NPA has established an EOD quick

87 Email from Muhabbat Ibrohimzoda, TNMAC, 15 April 2024.

88 Ibid.

89 Tajikistan Mine Action Programme General Land Release Operational Plan for October 2023 to December 2025, pp. 6-7; and email from Muhabbat Ibrohimzoda, TNMAC, 31 March 2023.

90 Emails from Faiz Mohammad Paktian, NPA, 6 May 2024; Nickwah Din Mohammed, FSD, 15 April 2024; and Saynurridin Kalandarov, UST, 7 May 2024.

91 Email from Melissa Andersson, NPA, 29 March 2023.

92 Email from Faiz Mohammad Paktian, NPA, 6 May 2024.

93 Email from Muhabbat Ibrohimzoda, TNMAC, 22 May 2017; and Second APMB Article 5 deadline Extension Request (draft), 31 March 2019, p. 21.

94 Email from Muhabbat Ibrohimzoda, TNMAC, 15 April 2024.

95 Email from Muhabbat Ibrohimzoda, TNMAC, 19 June 2022; and APMB Committee on the Implementation of Article 5, Preliminary Observations on Tajikistan, Intersessional meetings, Geneva, 20-22 June 2022.

96 Emails from Melissa Andersson, NPA, 29 March 2023; and Dr Nickwah Din Mohammed, FSD, 24 March 2023.

97 Email from Nickwah Din Mohammed, FSD, 21 April 2023.

98 Email from Nickwah Din Mohammed, FSD, 15 April 2024.

99 Email from Faiz Mohammad Paktian, NPA, 6 May 2024.

100 Ibid.

101 Emails from Melissa Andersson, NPA, 21 May and 23 June 2022; and interview with Muhabbat Ibrohimzoda, TNMAC, 24 June 2022.

response team within these four MTTs to support TNMAC and other national bodies in EOD spot tasks in 2024.¹⁰² NPA continues to cooperate with Tajikistan's Border Guard Forces, annually seconding personnel who are typically trained in both demining and BAC into NPA's MTTs.¹⁰³

National operator UST conducted CMR clearance in 2023.¹⁰⁴ However, UST is in the process of obtaining a licence for the use of explosive materials and devices from the relevant authorities.¹⁰⁵ As such, all submunitions discovered by UST in 2023 were destroyed by NPA and FSD.¹⁰⁶ UST teams report directly to TNMAC, which funds UST's survey and clearance operations.¹⁰⁷ UST deployed the same capacity in 2023 as it had done in 2022 and does not expect any major changes to the number of survey or clearance personnel in 2024.¹⁰⁸

Until the end of July 2023, FSD's Weapons and Ammunition Disposal (WAD) team in Tajikistan were deployed, as previously, for EOD spot tasks, including CMR. However, as planned, FSD transitioned from WAD to demining in 2023, with a team recruited and trained in August to September. However, this team was deployed for TS and clearance of anti-personnel mines, not CMR. FSD's number of demining personnel remained approximately the same between 2022 and 2023 and it expected no major change in 2024.¹⁰⁹

HDC MoD has a Mini-MineWolf, which was available for use also by NPA.¹¹⁰ However, this was not deployed for CMR clearance in 2023.¹¹¹

Table 3: Operational clearance capacities deployed in Tajikistan 2023¹¹²

Operator	MTTs	Total deminers	Mechanical assets/ machines	Comments
FSD	1	8	2 x MV-4 machines (available but not in use)	Deployed for EOD spot tasks and to destroy submunitions found during clearance by UST until 31 July 2023, then converted to MTTs and deployed for anti-personnel mine clearance.
UST	2	18		Also capable NTS & TS.
NPA	5	42		Also capable of survey.
HDC MoD	7	63	MoD has 1 Mini-MineWolf machine, also available for use by NPA.	Also capable of TS and battle area clearance (BAC).
Totals	15	131	3	

LAND RELEASE OUTPUTS AND PROGRESS TOWARDS COMPLETION

LAND RELEASE OUTPUTS IN 2023

A total of 0.57km² of cluster munition-contaminated area was released in 2023, all of which was cleared. Thus, no areas were reduced through TS or cancelled through NTS.¹¹³ A total of 511 submunitions were destroyed in 2023, including 107 discovered during clearance by UST but destroyed by other operators (102 by NPA and 5 by FSD),¹¹⁴ and five submunitions destroyed by NPA during survey of a BAC task in Romit, DRS region.¹¹⁵ A total of 0.22km² of previously unrecorded CMR contamination was added to the database in 2023.¹¹⁶

¹⁰² Email from Faiz Mohammad Paktian, NPA, 6 May 2024.

¹⁰³ Email from Melissa Andersson, NPA, 23 May 2023.

¹⁰⁴ Email from Muhabbat Ibrohimzoda, TNMAC, 15 April 2024.

¹⁰⁵ Emails from Muhabbat Ibrohimzoda, TNMAC, 31 March 2023; and Saynurridin Kalandarov, UST, 14 April 2023 and 7 May 2024.

¹⁰⁶ Emails from Muhabbat Ibrohimzoda, TNMAC, 15 April 2024; and Nickhwah Din Mohammed, FSD, 15 April 2024.

¹⁰⁷ Email from Saynurridin Kalandarov, UST, 16 May 2023 and 7 May 2024.

¹⁰⁸ Emails from Muhabbat Ibrohimzoda, TNMAC, 31 March 2023 and 15 April 2024.

¹⁰⁹ Emails from Nickhwah Din Mohammed, FSD, 24 March 2023 and 15 April 2024.

¹¹⁰ Emails from Muhabbat Ibrohimzoda, TNMAC, 31 March 2023; and Melissa Andersson, NPA, 23 May 2023.

¹¹¹ Email from Faiz Mohammad Paktian, NPA, 29 May 2024.

¹¹² Emails from Muhabbat Ibrohimzoda, TNMAC, 15 April 2024; Nickhwah Din Mohammed, FSD, 15 April 2024; and Faiz Mohammad Paktian, NPA, 6 May 2024.

¹¹³ Emails from Muhabbat Ibrohimzoda, TNMAC, 15 April 2024; Faiz Mohammad Paktian, NPA, 6 May 2024; and Saynurridin Kalandarov, UST, 7 May 2024.

¹¹⁴ Emails from Muhabbat Ibrohimzoda, TNMAC, 15 April 2024; Faiz Mohammad Paktian, NPA, 6 May 2024; and Nickhwah Din Mohammed, FSD, 15 April 2024.

¹¹⁵ Email from Faiz Mohammad Paktian, NPA, 29 May 2024.

¹¹⁶ Emails from Muhabbat Ibrohimzoda, TNMAC, 15 April 2024; and Faiz Mohammad Paktian, NPA, 6 May 2024.

SURVEY IN 2023

As was the case in 2022 and 2021, no areas were released through survey in Tajikistan in 2023.¹¹⁷ One previously unrecorded CMR-contaminated area, measuring 221,100m² was discovered by NPA and added to the national database.¹¹⁸ This is significantly lower than the 2.67km² added in 2022, due to the discovery of nine battle areas.¹¹⁹

CLEARANCE IN 2023

A total of 572,426m² of cluster munition-contaminated area was cleared in 2023, of which HDC MoD cleared 171,500 m² in the Rasht district of DRS, UST cleared 121,318m² in the Vahdat district of DRS, and NPA cleared 279,608m², also in Vahdat district (see Table 4).¹²⁰ Of the CMR clearance in 2023, 21,911m² was surface clearance only.¹²¹ 2023 clearance represents a minor decrease on the 612,168m² of cluster munition-contaminated area cleared in 2022.¹²² NPA experienced a minor decrease of 0.12km² in clearance output as it only had one cluster munition task in 2023.¹²³

A total of 511 submunitions were destroyed in 2023, including 107 discovered during clearance by UST, but destroyed by other operators,¹²⁴ and five during survey of a BAC task in Romit, DRS, by NPA.¹²⁵ As at May 2024, UST was awaiting its licence from the national authority to use explosives, as it had also been a year earlier.¹²⁶ All cluster munition-contaminated areas cleared in Tajikistan in 2023 were found to contain CMR.¹²⁷

Table 4: CMR clearance in 2023¹²⁸

Operator	Region/ District	Areas released	Area cleared (m ²)	Submunitions destroyed	Submunitions destroyed during spot tasks	Other UXO destroyed
HDC MOD	DRS/Rasht	1	*171,500	24	0	2
UST	DRS/Vahdat	2	*121,318	**107	0	**32
NPA	DRS/Vahdat	1	279,608	375	***5	0
Totals		4	572,426	506	5	34

* Clearance of these areas was not complete as at the end of 2023: Rasht task suspended and on one of two tasks in Vahdat suspended. ** Submunitions and UXO discovered during clearance of these areas by UST were destroyed by FSD (5 submunitions and 26 items of UXO) and NPA (102 submunitions and 6 items of UXO). ***Submunitions found during survey of BAC task in Romit in DRS region.

PROGRESS TOWARDS COMPLETION

TNMAC stated in May 2020 that Tajikistan hoped to complete CMR clearance by 2023,¹²⁹ although it made clear that progress towards achieving that target depended on the availability of funding.¹³⁰ TNMAC has also highlighted the challenge of setting a date, given that previously unknown areas of contamination have continued to be added to the national database in recent years: 2km² in 2020; 2.85km² in 2021,¹³¹ 2.67km² in 2022,¹³² and 0.22km² in 2023.¹³³ TNMAC now states that, with contaminated areas still being found, Tajikistan does not have a target date for the completion of CMR clearance.¹³⁴

117 Emails from Muhabbat Ibrohimzoda, TNMAC, 31 March 2023 and 15 April 2024.

118 Emails from Muhabbat Ibrohimzoda, TNMAC, 15 April 2024; and Faiz Mohammad Paktian, NPA, 6 May 2024.

119 Email from Muhabbat Ibrohimzoda, TNMAC, 31 March 2023.

120 Emails from Muhabbat Ibrohimzoda, TNMAC, 15 April 2024; Faiz Mohammad Paktian, NPA, 6 May 2024; and Saynurridin Kalandarov, UST, 7 May 2024.

121 Emails from Muhabbat Ibrohimzoda, TNMAC, 15 April and 23 July 2024.

122 Emails from Muhabbat Ibrohimzoda, TNMAC, 31 March and 16 June 2023, and 23 July 2024; Melissa Andersson, NPA, 29 March and 8 May 2023; and Saynurridin Kalandarov, UST, 14 April 2023. TNMAC notes that clearance of CMR-contaminated areas increased slightly (by 32,268 m²) in 2023 compared to 2022. Email from Muhabbat Ibrohimzoda, TNMAC, 15 April 2024. However, this is based on TNMAC's 2022 CMR clearance total of 540,158m². Emails from Muhabbat Ibrohimzoda, TNMAC, 31 March and 16 June 2023. This differs from Mine Action Review's figure for CMR clearance in 2022 of 612,618m², as this total includes task areas suspended as at the end of 2022. See Mine Action Review's Clearing Cluster Munition Remnants 2023.

123 Email from Faiz Mohammad Paktian, NPA, 6 May 2024.

124 Emails from Muhabbat Ibrohimzoda, TNMAC, 15 April 2024; Faiz Mohammad Paktian, NPA, 6 May 2024; and Nickwah Din Mohammed, FSD, 15 April 2024.

125 Emails from Faiz Mohammad Paktian, NPA, 6 and 29 May 2024.

126 Emails from Saynurridin Kalandarov, UST, 14 April 2023 and 7 May 2024.

127 Email from Muhabbat Ibrohimzoda, TNMAC, 15 April 2024.

128 Emails from Muhabbat Ibrohimzoda, TNMAC, 15 April 2024; Faiz Mohammad Paktian, NPA, 6 and 29 May 2024; Saynurridin Kalandarov, UST, 7 May 2024; and Nickwah Din Mohammed, FSD, 15 April 2024.

129 Emails from Muhabbat Ibrohimzoda, TNMAC, 28 May 2020 and 19 June 2022.

130 Email from Muhabbat Ibrohimzoda, TNMAC, 4 May 2021.

131 Email from Muhabbat Ibrohimzoda, TNMAC, 19 June 2022.

132 Email from Muhabbat Ibrohimzoda, TNMAC, 31 March 2023.

133 Email from Muhabbat Ibrohimzoda, TNMAC, 15 April 2024.

134 Emails from Muhabbat Ibrohimzoda, TNMAC, 31 March 2023 and 15 April 2024.

Tajikistan has a well-functioning mine action programme with strong national ownership and effective collaboration between stakeholders.¹³⁵ But the authorities detail ongoing challenges for mine action that include difficult terrain, harsh weather, and natural disasters, such as rockfalls, avalanches, and landslides.¹³⁶ The rate of progress towards completion will be heavily determined by available resources. Furthermore, while TNMAC does task operators with CMR clearance where possible and Tajikistan's General Land Release Plan does include details of known battle areas contaminated with CMR, progress towards completion will also be influenced by the extent to which Tajikistan directs its finite resources towards resourcing its commitment to clear landmines as a State Party to the APMBC.

Table 5: Five-year summary of CMR clearance

Year	Area cleared (km ²)
2023	0.57
2022	0.61
2021	1.87
2020	0.08
2019	0.52
Total	3.65

PLANNING FOR MANAGEMENT OF RESIDUAL CONTAMINATION

Tajikistan has begun preparing for the management of residual risk upon completion. Including the appointment of an adviser for residual risk management in 2022¹³⁷ and the production of a technical manual on residual risk management.¹³⁸ TNMAC also highlights that issues related to residual risk management are discussed during monthly technical meetings with implementing partners, and that residual risk reduction recommendations are reflected in the annual General Land Release Operations Plans. Furthermore, TNMAC is developing the operational capacity of UST and plans that UST will deal with residual risk of unexploded submunitions upon completion of area clearance.¹³⁹

135 "To Walk the Earth in Safety, 23rd Edition, Fiscal Year 2023, Documenting the U.S. Commitment to Conventional Weapons Destruction", U.S. Department of State (US DoS), Bureau of Political-Military Affairs, at: <https://bit.ly/3wVINKT>, p. 52.

136 Presentation by Muhabbat Ibrohimzoda, TNMAC, APMBC Intersessional Meetings, Geneva, 22 June 2022.

137 Emails from Saodat Asadova, OSCE, 3 June 2022; and Muhabbat Ibrohimzoda, TNMAC, 19 June 2022.

138 Emails from Saodat Asadova, OSCE, 30 March 2023 and Muhabbat Ibrohimzoda, TNMAC, 15 April 2024.

139 Email from Muhabbat Ibrohimzoda, TNMAC, 15 April 2024.