

ARTICLE 5 DEADLINE: 31 DECEMBER 2025
NOT ON TRACK TO MEET DEADLINE

KEY DATA

**ANTI-PERSONNEL (AP)
MINE CONTAMINATION: MEDIUM**

MINE ACTION REVIEW ESTIMATE

6 km²

AP MINE
CLEARANCE IN 2023

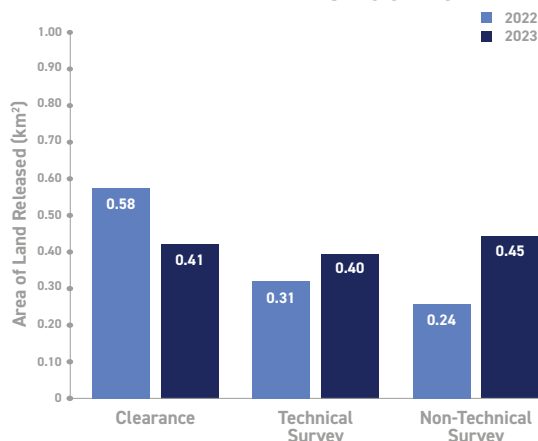
0.41 km²

AP MINES
DESTROYED IN 2023

1,127

(INCLUDING 6 DESTROYED IN
SPOT TASKS)

LAND RELEASE OUTPUT



CURRENT LIKELIHOOD OF MEETING 2025 CLEARANCE TARGET (as per the Oslo Action Plan commitment): **NONE**

KEY DEVELOPMENTS

On 8 November 2023, Tajikistan complied with the decision at the Fourth Review Conference of the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention (APMBC) by submitting an updated work plan for demining through to 2025. Tajikistan also stated that, given the lack of additional resources secured and the continuing discovery of previously unrecorded minefields each year, it expects to submit a further five-year extension request beyond its 2025 deadline. Tajikistan initiated an Individualised Approach to the Twenty-First Meeting of States Parties (21MSP). There was progress towards completing border delineation with Uzbekistan, a necessary step towards securing access to all areas that still require survey, with a treaty on the issue signed by both States in May 2024.

FIVE-YEAR OVERVIEW

In 2019, Tajikistan obtained a second extension to its Article 5 deadline through to the end of 2025. Since the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) concluded its programme of support in 2019, Tajikistan has built a programme with strong national ownership and good collaboration among stakeholders. However, it has been challenging to make major progress towards completion of demining, with land release since 2019 almost matched by the amount of previously unrecorded contamination identified.

Tajikistan's target of increasing capacity from 90 deminers to 180, as set out in its Extension Request, has not been reached, with 149 deminers deployed at the end of 2023. National

operator, the Union of Sappers of Tajikistan (UST), expanded its remit from survey to include clearance in 2021. In 2023, the Ministry of Defence (MoD)'s Humanitarian Demining Company (HDC) added another team and the Fondation Suisse de Déminage (FSD) transitioned from weapons and ammunition disposal to demining. A joint Tajik-Uzbek commission has been working on delineating the common border since 2021, with a protocol signed in May 2024. Full resolution of this issue is a necessary step to the completion of survey of a significant proportion of Tajikistan's mined areas. Tajikistan now expects to request a further five-year extension to its Article 5 deadline to complete clearance.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ACTION

- The Tajikistan National Mine Action Centre (TNMAC) should continue to prioritise accelerated survey to reach a clear national baseline estimate of contamination, as outlined in the previous Article 5 deadline extension request.
- Tajikistan should explore all possible ways to increase national capacity to the levels needed to fulfil its Article 5 commitments.
- Tajikistan should continue working with key stakeholders to address a projected shortfall in funding.
- TNMAC should continue to develop plans for establishing sustainable demining capacity to tackle contamination identified after completion.

ASSESSMENT OF NATIONAL PROGRAMME PERFORMANCE

Criterion	Score (2023)	Score (2022)	Performance Commentary
UNDERSTANDING OF CONTAMINATION (20% of overall score)	5	5	Tajikistan lacks a clear baseline estimate of contamination, with 63 suspected hazardous areas (SHAs) still to be surveyed, in addition to re-survey planned to define the extent of other mined areas more accurately. Lack of access has also prevented an accurate determination of contamination on the disputed Tajik-Uzbek border. Tajikistan planned to complete all survey and resurvey required by the end of 2023. However, it has now declared a new target to do so by the end of 2025, excluding the 54 SHAs in Sughd province along the border with Uzbekistan.
NATIONAL OWNERSHIP AND PROGRAMME MANAGEMENT (10% of overall score)	7	7	Tajikistan has strong national ownership of mine action, led by TNMAC. It has political will and provides an enabling environment for Article 5 implementation but is heavily reliant on funding from a limited number of international donors. Tajikistan has said it faces significant shortfalls in the funding required to meet its extension request targets. It initiated an Individualised Approach to the APMBC Twenty-First Meeting of States Parties in November 2023.
GENDER AND DIVERSITY (10% of overall score)	6	7	Tajikistan's mine action programme has a gender strategy drawn up with support from the Geneva Mine Action Programme (GMAP, now a programme of the Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining (GICHD)), but few women are employed in mine action. TNMAC says the government is committed to increasing involvement of women in mine action but there is little evidence that the number of female staff is rising. Mine action data are disaggregated by sex and age, and women and children are said to be consulted during community liaison.
ENVIRONMENTAL POLICIES AND ACTION* (10% of overall score)	7	Not Scored	Environmental concerns and climate resilience are said to be becoming increasingly pertinent in Tajikistan, as changes to weather patterns continue to negatively impact the nine-month window for demining operations. TNMAC states that environmental issues are taken into consideration during survey and clearance. Environmental assessments are said to be conducted. In October 2023, a multi-stakeholder workshop on environmental protection and climate change resilience was held, with specific follow-up actions agreed by partners.
INFORMATION MANAGEMENT AND REPORTING (10% of overall score)	6	6	TNMAC upgraded its information management by installing the Information Management System for Mine Action (IMSMA) Core database in 2019 and has continued efforts to streamline and improve the accuracy of data. Tajikistan receives ongoing support with information management from the GICHD. Tajikistan submits Article 7 reports of good quality.
PLANNING AND TASKING (10% of overall score)	6	6	Tajikistan's Article 5 deadline extension request sets out a framework for mine action, including annual targets, but these far exceed past results and require a doubling of capacity. This is dependent on availability of increased donor funding, which, so far, has not been forthcoming. In 2023, Tajikistan submitted an updated, comprehensive work plan for 2023 to 2025. TNMAC is advancing plans for capacity to clear residual contamination found after completion, having recruited a dedicated adviser on the issue in 2022.
LAND RELEASE SYSTEM** (10% of overall score)	6	6	Tajikistan has national mine action standards (NMAS) that were revised in 2017 and are compliant with the International Mine Action Standards (IMAS) and regularly updated. The NMAS are available in Russian and English. In 2023, Tajikistan updated the NMAS on marking, medical support, land release, battle area clearance, safety, and quality management.

Criterion	Score (2023)	Score (2022)	Performance Commentary
LAND RELEASE OUTPUTS AND ARTICLE 5 COMPLIANCE (20% of overall score)	7	7	Clearance in 2023 at 0.41km ² was slightly down on the 0.58km ² of output in 2022. Overall demining capacity decreased slightly in 2023, and at 149 deminers, remains short of the 180 deminers Tajikistan said it would need to meet its 2025 Article 5 deadline. In November 2023, Tajikistan informed the other States Parties to the APMBC that it expects to request a further five-year extension beyond its current 2025 deadline.
Average Score	6.2	6.2	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.

DEMINING CAPACITY

MANAGEMENT CAPACITY

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

NATIONAL OPERATORS

- Ministry of Defence (MoD), Humanitarian Demining Company (HDC)
- Union of Sappers Tajikistan (UST)
- Border Guard Forces of Tajikistan
- Committee of Emergency Situations and Civil Defence (CoES)

- National Guard

INTERNATIONAL OPERATORS

- Norwegian People's Aid (NPA)
- Fondation Suisse de Déminage (FSD)

OTHER ACTORS

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

UNDERSTANDING OF AP MINE CONTAMINATION

Tajikistan still lacks a clear baseline estimate of its mined areas. Most of Tajikistan's suspected hazardous areas (SHAs) are on the border with Uzbekistan, parts of which have still to be demarcated and have still to be surveyed for contamination.¹ Tajikistan reported having 7.54km² of anti-personnel (AP) mined area at the end of 2023, consisting of 125 confirmed hazardous areas (CHAs) measuring 6.59km² and 9 SHAs measuring almost 0.95km².² However, this estimate excludes the 54 SHAs in the Sughd region, which are estimated to cover a combined area of 3.25km².³ The total mined area is thus almost 10.8km² across 17 districts in all four regions (see Table 1).

These 54 SHAs were detailed in Tajikistan's Article 7 report for 2022.⁴ But since no land release was reported for Sughd in 2023 it is unclear why they were removed from Tajikistan's estimate of remaining contamination. Indeed, the Committee on Article 5 Implementation commented in June 2024 that it would welcome further information on Tajikistan's efforts to address them.⁵ The SHAs are listed in Tajikistan's work plan for October 2023 to December 2025, which it submitted in November 2023.⁶

Table 1: AP mined area by district (at end 2023)⁷

Region	District	CHAs	Area (m ²)	SHAs	Area (m ²)	Total area (m ²)
Region of Republican Subordination	Sangvor	2	150,000	0	0	150,000
Subtotals		1	2	150,000	0	150,000

1 Emails from Muhabbat Ibrohimzoda, Director, TNMAC, 22 April and 12 August 2021; Article 7 Report (covering 2021), Form D; and Article 7 Report (covering 2022), Form D.

2 Article 7 Report (covering 2023), Form D.

3 This estimated area is a rough estimate and the actual extent of any AP mined area along the border with Uzbekistan will only be established once the border has been delimited and survey authorised.

4 Article 7 Report (covering 2022), Form D.

5 APMBC Committee on Article 5 Implementation, "Preliminary Observations", Intersessional Meetings, Geneva, 18–20 June 2024, p. 1.

6 Tajikistan Mine Action Programme General Land Release Operational Plan for October 2023 to December 2025, November 2023, p. 14.

7 Emails from Muhabbat Ibrohimzoda, TNMAC, 11 April 2023 and 17 April 2024; Article 7 Report (covering 2022), Form D; and Article 7 Report (covering 2023), Form D.

Table 1 Continued

Region	District	CHAs	Area (m²)	SHAs	Area (m²)	Total area (m²)
Badakhshan (VMKB)	Darvoz	11	1,024,600	2	700,000	1,724,600
	Vanj	6	908,119	0	0	908,119
	Shughnon	3	56,000	0	0	56,000
	Ishkoshim	1	250,000	0	0	250,000
Subtotals	4	21	2,238,719	2	700,000	2,938,719
Khatlon	Farkhor	4	55,300	1	8,000	63,300
	Hamadoni	5	272,224	0	0	272,224
	Panj	18	1,013,941	0	0	1,013,941
	Jayhun	8	80,005	5	200,000	280,005
	Sh. Shohin	66	2,778,902	1	40,000	2,818,902
	Qabodiyon	1	5,184	0	0	5,184
Subtotals	6	102	4,205,556	7	248,000	4,453,556
Sughd	Asht	0	0	11	610,000	610,000
	Ayni	0	0	5	535,000	535,000
	Isfara	0	0	20	1,105,000	1,105,000
	Kanibadam	0	0	3	165,000	165,000
	Panjakent	0	0	13	715,000	715,000
	Shakhristan	0	0	2	120,000	120,000
Subtotals	6	0	0	54	3,250,000	3,250,000
Totals	17	125	6,594,275	63	4,198,000	10,792,275

Contamination affects all of Tajikistan's four administrative regions, also referred to as provinces. The highly mountainous regions of Khatlon and Badakhshan (also known as Gorno-Badakhshan Autonomous Oblast (GBAO), or VMKB) contain a significant amount of contamination;⁸ 40% and 27% of the total, respectively. Almost one third of contaminated areas, all in SHAs, remain in Sughd province while the smallest remaining proportion is in the Region of Republican Subordination (also known as the Districts of Republican Subordination or DRS). Contamination data are disaggregated by weapon type in the national database.⁹

In March 2023, Tajikistan restated that, in accordance with its extension request, all required survey and re-survey of hazardous areas should be completed by the end of 2023.¹⁰ The UNDP Tajikistan Mine Action Programme (TMAP) planned to conduct survey on the remaining 24 SHAs with a total estimated area of 1.26km² and conduct a resurvey of 26 CHAs with an area of 1.59km². These surveys were to include the SHAs without minefield records that had been identified in Darvoz (VKMB/GBAO province), and Shamsiddin Shohin (Khatlon province). However, TNMAC now aims to complete

remaining survey, excluding the SHAs in Sughd, by the end of 2025. TMAP plans to conduct survey in nine SHAs with a total area of 0.95km² and to re-survey 20 hazardous areas with a total area of 1.45km².¹¹ Tajikistan has said it needs technical support and expertise in order to complete the baseline survey.¹²

Building a comprehensive baseline of contamination depends in large part on the completion of delineation of Tajikistan's border with Uzbekistan. Tajikistan and Uzbekistan settled most of their 1,283km-long border dispute following the collapse of the Soviet Union but certain areas have not yet been delineated and the exact location of mined areas is still not known. Most mined areas are thought to be in disputed sections of the Tajik-Uzbek border which have not been accessible and assessed.¹³ Although most of the mines are believed to be located on Uzbek territory,¹⁴ there is a possibility that some mines may have been displaced downhill into Tajikistan due to landslides or flooding.¹⁵ Tajikistan and Uzbekistan agreed in 2018 to set up a joint commission to investigate mined areas along the border.¹⁶ As at August 2024, Tajikistan had yet to report on any follow-up action regarding

⁸ Statement of Tajikistan on Article 5 Implementation, Intersessional Meetings, Geneva, 19–21 June 2023.

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

¹⁰ Email from Muhabbat Ibrohimzoda, TNMAC, 11 April 2023.

¹¹ Email from Muhabbat Ibrohimzoda, TNMAC, 17 April 2024.

¹² Tajikistan's Mine Action Programme: Overview of Remaining Challenges and Needs', Individualised Approach Meeting, 21MSP, Geneva, 21 November 2023, p. 3.

¹³ Email from Muhabbat Ibrohimzoda, TNMAC, 27 April 2018.

¹⁴ Statement of Tajikistan, Sixteenth Meeting of States Parties (16MSP), Vienna, 20 December 2017.

¹⁵ "National Strategy of the Republic of Tajikistan on Humanitarian Mine Action for 2017–2020", 25 February 2017.

¹⁶ 2019 Article 5 deadline Extension Request, p. 16.

this proposed joint commission. However, online media sources indicate that delineation talks between Uzbekistan and Tajikistan were ongoing throughout 2023.¹⁷ A meeting of the working groups of the Joint Tajik-Uzbek Demarcation Commission took place on 29 April to 4 May 2024 in Dushanbe. It is reported that "mutually agreed upon proposals were prepared on the project demarcation line of the Tajik-Uzbek border, and a corresponding protocol was signed." The next meeting was planned to take place in Uzbekistan.¹⁸

FSD cautions that, in addition to contamination along the Tajik-Uzbek border, there may be unknown contamination along Tajikistan's border with Kyrgyzstan.¹⁹ In August 2024, FSD reported it had recently deployed teams along the Tajik-Kyrgyz border and had identified one battle area clearance (BAC) task so far. FSD expects unexploded ordnance (UXO) rather than AP mines to be the predominant contamination.²⁰ Tajikistan is also delimiting and demarcating its border with Kyrgyzstan, a process ongoing since 2022 but which is said to be close to completion.²¹ There are also mined areas on two islands in the Panj river on the Tajik-Afghan border. The islands were created by a change in the flow of the river, and have historically been inaccessible. TNMAC noted in 2022 that the river may again change its path and re-connect the islands with the Tajik riverbank in the future.²² Though they remained "non-executable" during 2022,²³ one of these areas, measuring 30,000m² and located in Ayvoj, in the Shahrituz district of Khatlon, was cancelled during resurvey in 2023. TNMAC planned to resurvey the other in the course of 2024.²⁴

In 2023, a total of 607,807m² of CHAs were added to Tajikistan's information management database.²⁵ This included six mined areas with a total area of 231,000m² identified as a result of review of the records of minefields that had not previously been accessed, as well as an increase in the size of known polygons through technical survey (TS).²⁶ Tajikistan has been consistently adding new areas to the database in recent years, though the total amount of newly recorded AP mined area in 2023 is a slight decrease on the 617,971m² added in 2022²⁷ and a more notable decrease on the 693,542m² added in 2021.²⁸

Mine contamination in Tajikistan dates from conflicts in the 1990s. Tajikistan's border with Afghanistan was mined by Russian forces in 1992–98; the border with Uzbekistan was mined by Uzbek forces in 1999–2001; and the Central Region was contaminated during the 1992–97 civil war. As the Union of Sappers Tajikistan (UST), recalls, some AP mines were used without being recorded, particularly during the civil war. As such, non-technical survey (NTS) teams are trying to find former military personnel and other informants who were involved in the civil war and who can help survey teams build a picture of likely contamination.²⁹ Tajikistan's terrain can also present a challenge to determining an accurate baseline of contamination in a given area. Mudslides, landslides, avalanches, and rockfalls can cause mines to move or become more deeply buried.³⁰

In Khatlon region, which borders Afghanistan and Uzbekistan, mines were laid in and around military positions on hilltops overlooking the Panj river valley, mostly delivered remotely by helicopter or laid by troops who were moved in and out by helicopter. There are no established roads or tracks to access the minefields for survey or clearance.³¹ Information about mined areas on the Tajik-Uzbek border is limited and based on the NTS conducted in 2011–15 by FSD and a needs assessment survey by the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) in 2013–15. However, the FSD survey only covered one part of the border in Sughd province, and although survey teams recorded 82 accidents they did not have access to the border and relied mainly on incident forms. As a result, records lack detail on the exact location where mine incidents occurred.³²

Neither TNMAC nor operators report the presence of mines of an improvised nature in Tajikistan. However, booby-traps in minefields were recorded by FSD along the Tajik-Afghan border between 2008 and 2014. These included a PMN-2 AP mine placed on top of an ML-7 mine that serves as an anti-handling device and 200g of TNT; an OZM-72 AP mine placed on top of an ML-7; and a stone placed on top of an ML-7.³³ The only reported demining accident in Tajikistan in 2023 involved a PMN-2 AP mine replaced with an ML-7.³⁴

17 "Demining Mountains: Tajikistan's Struggle Against Landmine Contamination", *NCT CBNW*, 7 February 2024, at: <https://bit.ly/4d5WdKY>.

18 "Tajikistan and Uzbekistan discussed border demarcation – a protocol signed", *Central Asian Light*, 6 May 2024, at: <https://bit.ly/3LKBbpc>; and "Uzbek-Tajik demarcation commission held a meeting in Dushanbe", *KUN.UZ*, 4 May 2024, at: <https://bit.ly/3LMkSbx>.

19 Email from Nickhwah Din Mohammed, FSD, 11 April 2024.

20 Email from Nickhwah Din Mohammed, FSD, 16 August 2024.

21 "Tajikistan and Uzbekistan discussed border demarcation – a protocol signed", *Central Asian Light*, 6 May 2024.

22 Interview with Muhabbat Ibrohimzoda and Murtazo Gurev, TNMAC, Dushanbe, 25 May 2018.

23 Email from Muhabbat Ibrohimzoda, TNMAC, 11 April 2023.

24 Emails from Muhabbat Ibrohimzoda, TNMAC, 17 April and 3 October 2024.

25 Email from Muhabbat Ibrohimzoda, TNMAC, 3 October 2024.

26 Email from Muhabbat Ibrohimzoda, TNMAC, 17 April 2024.

27 Email from Muhabbat Ibrohimzoda, TNMAC, 11 April 2023.

28 Email from Muhabbat Ibrohimzoda, TNMAC, 19 June 2022; and Article 7 Report (covering 2021), Form D.

29 Email from Saynurridin Kalandarov, Director, UST, 14 April 2023.

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

31 Interview with Muhabbat Ibrohimzoda and Murtazo Gurev, TNMAC, Dushanbe, 25 May 2018; and Statement of Tajikistan, 16MSP, Vienna, 20 December 2017.

32 Interview with Muhabbat Ibrohimzoda and Murtazo Gurev, TNMAC, Dushanbe, 25 May 2018; Statement of Tajikistan, 16MSP, Vienna, 20 December 2017; and 2019 Article 5 deadline Extension Request, p. 33.

33 Email from Nickhwah Din Mohammed, FSD, 11 April 2024.

34 Email from Muhabbat Ibrohimzoda, TNMAC, 17 April 2024; and Statement of Tajikistan on Victim Assistance, 21MSP, 20–24 November 2023, Geneva.

OTHER EXPLOSIVE ORDNANCE CONTAMINATION

Tajikistan is also believed to have cluster munition remnants (CMR) remaining on its territory (see Mine Action Review's *Clearing Cluster Munition Remnants 2024* report on Tajikistan for further information).

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.³⁵

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).³⁶ 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.³⁷ Tajikistan's Parliament adopted a Law on Humanitarian Mine Action in 2016.³⁸ The MoD plays a significant role in the mine actor sector through the HDC, the biggest national operator, which is funded by the United States (US)³⁹ and the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE).⁴⁰

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.⁴¹

National funding has remained modest but consistent in recent years. In 2023, the Tajik government provided 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 APMBC. A further US\$56,710 (the same amount as in 2022), was allocated to support operational mine action.⁴² 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.⁴³ TNMAC asserts that Tajikistan's National Strategy on Humanitarian Mine Action for 2021–30 provides for resource mobilisation for the planned activities.⁴⁴ Tajikistan estimated that, to meet its Article 5 obligations by the end of 2025, it required US\$21 million, of which it had secured only US\$7.1million.⁴⁵ Tajikistan initiated an Individualised Approach at the 21MSP in November 2023.⁴⁶

TNMAC regularly receives support on topics such as information management and implementation of APBMC Article 5 from the GICHD.⁴⁷ 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,⁴⁸ which was established with the support of the OSCE to deliver an explosive ordnance disposal (EOD) training programme in Central Asia.⁴⁹ US Central Command also delivered training in the International Mine Action Standards (IMAS) to the Centre.⁵⁰ The OSCE also continued financial support to TNMAC in 2023, providing approximately €204,000 to support the survey and clearance operations of three HDC teams.⁵¹

Norwegian People's Aid (NPA) does not have a formal capacity development agreement with TNMAC but assists informally with activities upon request.⁵² In February 2023, NPA provided medical training for staff from NPA and other demining organisations in Tajikistan.⁵³ Also in 2023, NPA was engaged with TNMAC on work to improve

35 2019 Article 5 deadline Extension Request, p. 20.

36 Ibid., pp. 20–21; and General Land Release Operational Plan for October 2023 to December 2025, p. 9.

37 2019 Article 5 deadline Extension Request, p. 1.

38 Ibid., pp. 20–21.

39 Ibid., p. 23.

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

41 Emails from Faiz Mohammad Paktian, Country Director, Norwegian People's Aid (NPA), 6 May 2024; Saodat Asadova, OSCE, 9 April 2024; Nickhwah Din Mohammed, FSD, 24 March 2023; and Saynurridin Kalandarov, UST, 14 April 2023.

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

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

44 Email from Muhabbat Ibrohimzoda, TNMAC, 17 April 2024.

45 General Land Release Operational Plan for October 2023 to December 2025, pp. 12–13.

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

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

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

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

50 "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 (US DoS), at: <https://bit.ly/3wVInkT>, p. 58.

51 Article 7 Report (covering 2023), Form F; and email from Saodat Asadova, OSCE, 19 August 2024.

52 Emails from Melissa Andersson, (then) Country Director, NPA, 21 May 2022 and 29 March 2023.

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

operational efficiency, for example, increasing the use of targeted technical survey (TTS) as well as improving national standards and standard operating procedures (SOPs).⁵⁴ In November 2023 Tajikistan highlighted a need for capacity development in the areas of survey, information management, quality management (QM), priority setting, risk assessment, and post-clearance assessment.⁵⁵

Monthly technical coordination meetings continued in 2023⁵⁶ with representation from operators, management staff of the engineering units of the MoD, Border Troops, the State Committee for National Security, the CoES, and the

National Guard.⁵⁷ An annual meeting also takes place, under the auspices of the CIHL, during which TNMAC reports on progress in and challenges to implementation of Tajikistan's commitments under the APMBC. The last annual meeting at the time of writing took place in December 2023 where the results of mine action were presented and discussed and the annual work plan for 2024 agreed.⁵⁸ It has been suggested that more discussion on funding at these meetings would be beneficial given the relatively small number of donors to the programme.⁵⁹

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.⁶⁰ 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.⁶¹ Tajikistan claims that gender is mainstreamed in all aspects of its mine action programme,⁶² which is underpinned by Tajikistan's legislation on gender equality, its National Development Strategy to 2030, and other key national programme and strategy documents.⁶³ NPA and TNMAC revived meetings of a gender working group in 2020, which met twice annually in 2021 and 2022.⁶⁴ Although it did not meet in 2023, NPA has persuaded TNMAC to reinstate the meetings, with technical support from NPA as needed.⁶⁵ Relevant mine action data continue to be disaggregated by sex and age.⁶⁶

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.⁶⁷ 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.⁶⁸ 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 2023.⁶⁹ No women were employed by the MoD's HDC in either operational or managerial/supervisory positions in 2023 or in the two previous years.⁷⁰

The OSCE emphasises the importance of gender mainstreaming and balance throughout project implementation and had a Gender Strategy and Action Plan in place for 2021–23.⁷¹ An updated one to cover 2024–26 was in development at the time of writing.⁷² 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 IMAS.⁷³

NPA has integrated a gender and diversity policy into its Tajikistan operations⁷⁴ and had a gender equality implementation plan in place for 2024.⁷⁵ The total number of

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

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

56 Emails from Muhabbat Ibrohimzoda, TNMAC, 15 April 2024; Saodat Asadova, OSCE, 9 April 2024; Nickhwah Din Mohammed, FSD, 11 April 2024; Faiz Mohammad Paktian, NPA, 6 May 2024; and Saynuriddin Kalandarov, UST, 7 May 2024.

57 Email from Muhabbat Ibrohimzoda, TNMAC, 17 April 2024.

58 Ibid.

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

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

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

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

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

64 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.

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

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

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

68 2019 Article 5 deadline Extension Request, Additional Information received on 3 August 2019.

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

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

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

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

73 Email from Saodat Asadova, OSCE, 9 April 2024; and interview in Geneva, 24 June 2022.

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

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

women employed by NPA fell slightly in 2023 compared to 2022—from 20% to 15%—and the proportion of operational positions filled by women fell from 20% to 13%. However, in management or supervisory positions the proportion increased significantly: from 29% to 50%.⁷⁶ In 2023, NPA adopted an initiative with local women’s associations to 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.

NPA deploys gender-mixed teams to conduct survey and impact assessment activities, to help ensure community liaison activities are gender inclusive.⁷⁷ 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.⁷⁸ Its programme introduced a new gender and diversity focal point into the team in 2023.⁷⁹

FSD employs a diverse workforce in Tajikistan in line with its organisational Gender, Diversity and Inclusion policy. In

2023, one quarter of FSD’s staff in Tajikistan were women (the same as in 2022), although the proportion of both management or supervisory positions and operational positions occupied by women increased slightly.⁸⁰ 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.⁸¹

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. However, it does not yet employ any women among its 54 staff and has found that, though women do apply for operational positions, when field conditions are outlined during interviews, many applicants (including also men), refuse the role at that point. 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.⁸²

Table 2: Gender composition of operators in 2023⁸³

Organisation	Total staff	Women staff	Total managerial or supervisory staff	Women in managerial or supervisory positions	Total operational staff	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%)	44	10 (23%)	221	15 (7%)

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.⁸⁴ TNMAC states that environmental issues are taken into consideration during

survey and clearance to ensure operations are conducted without negative environmental impact and that hazardous areas released and handed over to communities in a state suitable for intended use.⁸⁵ Environmental assessments are said to be conducted to support planning and implementation of survey and clearance.⁸⁶

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

85 Email from Muhabbat Ibrohimzoda, TNMAC 19 June 2022.

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

Clearance is undertaken according to Tajikistan's 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".⁸⁷ Based on the NMAS, TNMAC continuously monitors the demining activities of all operators to assess environmental implications and protection requirements. In any cases of violations or poor practice, corrective and preventive measures are undertaken.⁸⁸ 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.⁸⁹

In October 2023, a one-day workshop on environmental protection and climate change resilience was led by NPA, with 50 participants from mine action partners, including OSCE, 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 2024.⁹⁰ These 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; measures to reduce greenhouse gas emissions; and various energy, water, and resource-saving measures.⁹¹

NPA has an environmental SOP and an annual action plan linked to its environmental policy.⁹² 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. 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.⁹³

FSD has an environmental policy and SOP at its headquarters and was due to begin the International Organisation for Standardisation (ISO) 14001 accreditation process in 2023.⁹⁴ 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.⁹⁵ 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.⁹⁶ 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).⁹⁷

UST has an SOP on environmental protection based on Tajikistan's NMAS, which has been approved by TNMAC.⁹⁸ After leaving field camps or completing operations, UST buries waste, excluding metal and plastic materials.⁹⁹

INFORMATION MANAGEMENT AND REPORTING

TNMAC uses the Information management System for Mine Action (IMSMA) Core for its national database.¹⁰⁰ Data are disaggregated by weapon type and method of land release.¹⁰¹ NPA confirms that the data collection forms introduced and updated by TNMAC in 2020–21 are consistent and enable efficient collection of data.¹⁰²

87 Emails from Saodat Asadova, OSCE, 3 and 9 June 2022; and Muhabbat Ibrohimzoda, TNMAC, 19 June 2022; and National Mine Action Standards (NMAS) Chapter 20: "Environment, Health and Safety".

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

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

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

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

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

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

94 Email from Nickhwah Din Mohammed, FSD, 24 March 2023.

95 Email from Nickhwah Din Mohammed, FSD, 29 May 2024.

96 Email from Nickhwah Din Mohammed, FSD, 24 March 2023.

97 "Tajikistan", FSD website, accessed 25 March 2024 at: <https://bit.ly/30zn7hh>.

98 Email from Saynurriddin Kalandarov, UST, 14 April 2023.

99 Email from Saynurriddin Kalandarov, UST, 7 May 2024.

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

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

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

Both the database and the information management activities of TNMAC are said to be operating well, with progress and other reports from the field received daily, as well as cross-checking by TNMAC of the data.¹⁰³ Tajikistan's updated work 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.¹⁰⁴ 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.¹⁰⁵

In recent years, Tajikistan has submitted detailed Article 7 reports of generally good quality. As noted above, it is unclear why the SHAs in Sughd region are omitted from Tajikistan's Article 7 report covering 2023. The report is otherwise detailed. Tajikistan submitted an updated work plan for 2021–25 as required under the terms of the granting of its second extension request.¹⁰⁶ In November 2023, Tajikistan acted upon the decision at the Fourth Review Conference of the APMBC by submitting an updated plan for 2023 to 2025.¹⁰⁷

PLANNING AND TASKING

TNMAC has elaborated a mine action strategy for 2021 to 2030 and an action plan for its implementation, both of which have been approved by the government.¹⁰⁸ Tajikistan's updated multiyear work plan for 2023–25 contains valuable detail.¹⁰⁹ An annual work plan was in place for 2023 and one had been prepared for 2024.¹¹⁰

Tajikistan's Article 5 deadline extension request submitted in 2019, which sought a deadline for mine clearance of the end of 2025, said land release efforts would focus mainly on the central region, which spans parts of the three provinces of Khatlon, GBAO, and DRS; and on mined areas along the border with Afghanistan, especially the Shamsiddin Shohin district (the area most heavily contaminated with AP mines). Tajikistan aimed to complete work on the Central region and complete survey of the Tajik-Afghan border by 2023.¹¹¹ However, ongoing security challenges along this border have intermittently impeded access to some of Tajikistan's most heavily mined districts in recent years and made this impossible.¹¹² NPA notes that the security situation on the Tajik-Afghan border did not hinder operations in 2023.¹¹³ However, in April 2024, Tajikistan restated that implementation of land release plans remained dependent on the security in these areas.¹¹⁴

In 2019, total contaminated area was estimated to be almost 8.85m², of which Tajikistan planned to release 6.5km²

between 2019 and 2023. In fact, Tajikistan released almost 6.54km². However, it also identified 52 mined areas covering more than 9km² for which no minefield records existed.¹¹⁵

Tajikistan has revised its annual land release targets a number of times in recent years. The General Land Release Operational Plan 2021–2025, issued in January 2021, provided for release a total of 8.55km².¹¹⁶ In June 2022, Tajikistan shared revised annual land release targets for 2022–2025 totalling 8.57km².¹¹⁷ Further adjustments to these targets were stated in June 2023, almost doubling the amount to be released during 2023–25 from 6.56km² to 12.82km².¹¹⁸ However, these targets have been revised downwards once again, and in the updated work plan submitted in November 2023, Tajikistan provided annual land release targets for 2024 and 2025 of just over 3.64km² across 68 hazardous areas and 3.81km² across 65 hazardous areas respectively, all in the regions of Khatlon, VKMB/GBAO and DRS.¹¹⁹ Crucially, this is based on an assumption of increased operational capacity, from 13 to 18 demining teams of 180 deminers, which will require securing additional funding. Within the work plan Tajikistan has also made provision for continuing work at its current capacity and projecting completion in 2030,¹²⁰ and Tajikistan has provided more modest targets for 2024 and 2025 than those set out in the updated work plan in its latest Article 7 Report (covering 2023), which are for release of CHAs only (see Table 3).¹²¹

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

104 General Land Release Operational Plan for October 2023 to December 2025, pp. 4–5.

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

106 Committee on Article 5 Implementation, "Preliminary Observations", Intersessional Meetings, Geneva, 20–22 June 2022.

107 Implementation Support Unit, "Tajikistan", accessed 1 August 2024 at: <https://bit.ly/4c4tJjf>.

108 Emails from Muhabbat Ibrohimzoda, TNMAC, 22 April 2021 and 7 July 2022; and Committee on Article 5 Implementation, "Preliminary Observations", Intersessional Meetings, Geneva, 19–21 June 2023.

109 General Land Release Operational Plan for October 2023 to December 2025.

110 Email from Muhabbat Ibrohimzoda, TNMAC, 17 April 2024.

111 2019 Article 5 deadline Extension Request, pp. 9, 34, and 42.

112 Presentation by Tajikistan on Article 5 deadline Extension Request, Geneva, 23 May 2019; and email from Muhabbat Ibrohimzoda, TNMAC, 19 June 2022.

113 Email from Faiz Mohammad Paktian, NPA, 8 May 2024.

114 Email from Muhabbat Ibrohimzoda, TNMAC, 17 April 2024.

115 Statement of Tajikistan, Intersessional Meetings, Geneva, 18–20 June 2024.

116 Email from Muhabbat Ibrohimzoda, TNMAC, 12 August 2021.

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

118 Ibid.

119 General Land Release Operational Plan for October 2023 to December 2025, pp. 8–9.

120 Ibid., pp. 8–9 and 12–13; and Statement of Tajikistan, 21MSP, 20–24 November 2023, Geneva.

121 Article 7 Report (covering 2023), Form F.

Notably, Tajikistan's land release plans for 2024 and 2025 do not include the 54 SHAs in the region of Sughd, bordering Uzbekistan, which cover a total area of 3.25km² (see Table 1). However, the locations and sizes of the SHAs are given and Tajikistan states that it will "continue to provide updates on the development of cooperation with regard to land release along the Tajik-Uzbek border in Article 7 reports and to the Meetings of the States Parties".¹²²

Table 3: Annual land release targets¹²³

Year	No. of CHAs to be released	Total area (m ²)
2024	46	1,369,797
2025	20	1,912,675
Totals	66	3,282,472

Currently, land release tasks 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; and the local security situation (permission from the Border Forces).¹²⁴

In the updated work plan submitted in November 2023, Tajikistan noted the following additional criteria for prioritisation:

- High prioritisation of mined areas with economic or infrastructural impact (e.g. agricultural land, communications infrastructure);
- Higher prioritisation of districts with a large number of minefield records yet to undergo NTS. Districts with a smaller number of records are to be surveyed by clearance teams during clearance operations;
- A focus on the central region of the country between June and September; and
- Re-survey in the minefields hardest to reach.¹²⁵

As noted, tasking decisions are also influenced by the ongoing security situation on the Tajik-Afghan border, where access is regulated by the Border Guard Forces of Tajikistan.¹²⁶ Operators report that task dossiers are issued in a timely manner by TNMAC.¹²⁷

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 English,¹²⁸ 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, BAC, safety, and QM. Implementing partners updated their SOPs according to the new NMAS.¹²⁹ TNMAC states that when any updates to the NMAS or SOPs are made, this is undertaken in consultation with clearance operators.¹³⁰

Operators report that Tajikistan's NMAS are appropriately adapted to the local threat and enable effective, efficient, and safe survey and clearance work.¹³¹ In 2023, FSD suggested a minor improvement would be to increase provision for casualty/medical evacuation when teams are working at high

altitude in remote areas.¹³² TNMAC has reassured operators that, should it ever be necessary, personnel would be evacuated to Dushanbe by military helicopter, albeit with the fuel costs to be met by the operator.¹³³

During 2023, TNMAC also updated its criteria for "Risk Assessment and All Reasonable Efforts" and communicated these to all to demining organisations with regard to survey, demining, BAC, and the storage of explosives and ammunition.¹³⁴

NPA updated its SOPs, including those relating to its marking systems and excavation, in late 2023 and early 2024. The updates were made in consultation with other operators, to ensure alignment with best practice and the sector standards and have been approved by NPA Head Office and TNMAC.¹³⁵

¹²² General Land Release Operational Plan for October 2023 to December 2025, p. 14.

¹²³ Article 7 Report (covering 2023), Form F.

¹²⁴ General Land Release Operational Plan for October 2023 to December 2025, pp. 6–7; and email from Muhabbat Ibrohimzoda, TNMAC, 31 March 2023.

¹²⁵ General Land Release Operational Plan for October 2023 to December 2025, p. 7.

¹²⁶ Emails from Melissa Andersson, NPA, 1 July 2022 and 29 April 2023.

¹²⁷ Emails from Faiz Mohammad Paktian, NPA, 6 May 2024; Nickhwah Din Mohammed, FSD, 15 April 2024; and Saynurridin Kalandarov, UST, 7 May 2024.

¹²⁸ Email from Muhabbat Ibrohimzoda, TNMAC, 22 May 2017; and 2019 Article 5 deadline Extension Request, 31 March 2019, p. 21.

¹²⁹ Email from Muhabbat Ibrohimzoda, TNMAC, 15 April 2024.

¹³⁰ Email from Muhabbat Ibrohimzoda, TNMAC, 19 June 2022; and Committee on Article 5 Implementation, "Preliminary Observations", Intersessional Meetings, Geneva, 20–22 June 2022.

¹³¹ Emails from Melissa Andersson, NPA, 29 March 2023; and Dr Nickhwah Din Mohammed, FSD, 24 March 2023.

¹³² Email from Nickhwah Din Mohammed, FSD, 21 April 2023.

¹³³ Email from Nickhwah Din Mohammed, FSD, 15 April 2024.

¹³⁴ Email from Muhabbat Ibrohimzoda, TNMAC, 17 April 2024.

¹³⁵ Email from Faiz Mohammad Paktian, NPA, 8 May 2024.

QM is coordinated and monitored by TNMAC, with processes and requirements agreed with TMAP. TMAP has external and internal QM team members who participate in the QM process.¹³⁶

Four minefields, measuring a total of 59,001m², were cleared in 2023, which proved to contain no AP mines.¹³⁷ Two of these minefields, measuring 30,329m², were cleared by NPA in Panj district.¹³⁸

OPERATORS AND OPERATIONAL TOOLS

All teams deployed for AP mine clearance in 2023 were multi-task teams (MTTs) capable of both survey and clearance (see Table 4). International operator FSD transitioned from weapons and ammunition disposal (WAD) to demining in August 2023 (as planned), with a team recruited and trained in August and September, and deployed for TS and clearance of AP mines for the remainder of the year.¹³⁹

Table 4: Operational multi-task teams deployed in Tajikistan in 2023¹⁴⁰

Operator	MTTs	Total deminers	Mechanical assets/machines	Comments
HDC MoD	7	63	1 x Mini-MineWolf machine. Also available for use by NPA.	Deployed for NTS and clearance in 2023. Also capable of TS and BAC.
FSD	1	8	2 x MV-4 machines (available but not in use).	Deployed for EOD spot tasks and to destroy explosive ordnance (EO) found during clearance by UST until 31 July 2023, then converted to MTTs and deployed for AP mined area TS and clearance for remainder of year.
NPA	5	42		0 Deployed for NTS, TS, clearance and EOD spot tasks in 2023. Also capable of BAC.
UST	4	36		0 Two teams of 18 personnel deployed for NTS and TS in 2023. Additional two teams of 18 personnel designated for clearance, but sometimes perform survey operations.
Totals	17	149	3	

Tajikistan's 2019 Article 5 deadline extension request set an ambitious target of doubling the number of deminers from 90 to 180.¹⁴¹ In 2020, it took initial steps in that direction,¹⁴² then in 2022 slightly increased mine action capacity again to 169 personnel across the combined survey and clearance teams of all operators, compared to 150 personnel in 2021.¹⁴³ In 2023, support from the US Department of State allowed an additional team to be added to the MoD HDC, with the addition of one further team planned for 2024.¹⁴⁴ However, overall capacity stood at 149 deminers in 2023 (see Table 4), still short of the 180 Tajikistan was aiming for. In November 2023, TNMAC restated that, in order to clear the remaining contamination in line with its

extension request, Tajikistan would need to increase capacity to 23 teams across all operators.¹⁴⁵

NPA continued to deploy MTTs in 2023, capable of conducting NTS, TS, mine clearance, and BAC.¹⁴⁶ NPA maintained the same operational capacity in 2023 as it had 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 response team within these four MTTs to support TNMAC and other national bodies in spot tasks in 2024.¹⁴⁷ NPA continues to cooperate with Tajikistan's Border Guard Forces, which annually seconds personnel (who are typically trained in both demining and BAC) into NPA's MTTs.¹⁴⁸ NPA points out that, while they expect to decrease by one team in 2024 due to a

136 2019 Article 5 deadline Extension Request, pp. 49–50.
137 Email from Muhabbat Ibrohimzoda, TNMAC, 17 April 2024.
138 Emails from Faiz Mohammad Paktian, NPA, 8 May and 9 August 2024.
139 Emails from Nickhwah Din Mohammed, FSD, 24 March 2023 and 11 April 2024.
140 Emails from Muhabbat Ibrohimzoda, TNMAC, 17 April 2024; Nickhwah Din Mohammed, FSD, 11 April 2024; Saynurridin Kalandarov, UST, 7 May and 6 August 2024; and Faiz Mohammad Paktian, NPA, 6 May 2024.
141 2019 Article 5 deadline Extension Request, p. 8.
142 Emails from Muhabbat Ibrohimzoda, TNMAC, 19 and 24 June and 25 August 2022; and Statement of Tajikistan on Article 5, 19MSP, 17 November 2021.
143 Emails from Muhabbat Ibrohimzoda, TNMAC, 19 and 24 June 2022.
144 Email from Muhabbat Ibrohimzoda, TNMAC, 17 April 2024.
145 General Land Release Operational Plan for October 2023 to December 2025, p. 4.
146 Emails from Melissa Andersson, NPA, 21 May and 23 June 2022; and interview with Muhabbat Ibrohimzoda, TNMAC, 24 June 2022, Geneva.
147 Emails from Faiz Mohammad Paktian, NPA, 6 and 8 May 2024.
148 Email from Melissa Andersson, NPA, 23 May 2023.

funding shortfall, they have the necessary equipment and capability to expand again quickly should funding increase.¹⁴⁹ Prior to 2023, NPA was the only international operator undertaking mine clearance in Tajikistan.

Until the end of July 2023, FSD's WAD team in Tajikistan were deployed, as in previous years, for EOD spot tasks. However, as planned, FSD transitioned from WAD to demining in 2023, with a team recruited and trained in August to September, and deployed for TS and clearance of AP mines for the remainder of the year. The number of FSD deminers remained roughly the same between 2022 and 2023. It expected to add two further teams in 2024 due to a new grant from the PATRIP Foundation – a new donor.¹⁵⁰

National operator UST conducted NTS and TS in 2023.¹⁵¹ UST has previously undertaken clearance, including in 2022. However, the organisation is in the process of obtaining a licence for the use of explosive materials and devices and says its application was being reviewed by the relevant authorities as at May 2024.¹⁵² As such, all ordnance discovered by UST must be destroyed by other operators.¹⁵³ This issue has been ongoing since at least 2021, when UST was first accredited to conduct clearance.¹⁵⁴ According to Tajikistan's updated work plan, permissions to transport,

store and use explosive materials are still to be obtained from the body for State Supervision of Safe Work in Industry and Mining, the Ministry of Internal Affairs, and the MoD.¹⁵⁵ According to UST, one of the key requirements to gain the necessary permission from the body for State Supervision of Safe Work in Industry and Mining is having a guarded warehouse, which UST does not yet possess.¹⁵⁶

UST teams report directly to TNMAC, which funds UST's survey and clearance operations.¹⁵⁷ UST deployed the same capacity in 2023 as it had done in 2022 and did not expect any major changes to the number of survey or clearance personnel in 2024.¹⁵⁸

In terms of mechanical assets, the MoD HDC has a Mini-MineWolf, which was also available for use by NPA.¹⁵⁹ However, NPA points out that these machines currently cannot be used to their full capacity due to a lack of funding.¹⁶⁰ In June 2024, the Committee on Article 5 Implementation stated that it would welcome updates from Tajikistan on the full range of practical land release methods, including outcomes concerning the feasibility and deployment of mechanical assets.¹⁶¹ Tajikistan says it needs more specialist support to maintain its mechanical demining assets.¹⁶²

LAND RELEASE OUTPUTS AND ARTICLE 5 COMPLIANCE

LAND RELEASE OUTPUTS IN 2023

TNMAC and operators reported land release totalling just over 1.26km² in 2023, of which 0.45km² was cancelled through NTS, almost 0.40km² was reduced through TS, and just over 0.41km² was cleared.¹⁶³ A total of 1,121 AP mines and 33 items of UXO were destroyed during clearance and technical survey. A further six AP mines were destroyed during spot tasks in 2023.¹⁶⁴

Tajikistan added 607,807m² of CHAs to the national database in 2023.¹⁶⁵

SURVEY IN 2023

A total of 854,267m² was released through survey in 2023, of which 451,866m² was cancelled through NTS and 402,401m² was reduced through TS¹⁶⁶ (see Tables 5 and 6). Overall, the amount released by survey is an increase on the 546,759m² released through survey in 2022, mainly due to a notable increase in cancellation by NTS compared to the 236,279m² cancelled in 2022.¹⁶⁷

149 Interview with Faiz Mohammad Paktian, NPA, in Geneva, 21 November 2023.

150 Emails from Nickhwah Din Mohammed, FSD, 24 March 2023 and 11 April 2024.

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

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

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

154 Emails from Muhabbat Ibrohimzoda, TNMAC, 24 June and 25 August 2022.

155 General Land Release Operational Plan for October 2023 to December 2025, p. 15.

156 Email from Saynurridin Kalandarov, UST, 7 August 2024.

157 Emails from Saynurridin Kalandarov, UST, 16 May 2023 and 7 May 2024.

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

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

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

161 Committee on Article 5 Implementation, "Preliminary Observations", Intersessional Meetings, Geneva, 18–20 June 2024.

162 Presentation by Muhabbat Ibrohimzoda, TNMAC, 21MSP, 20–24 November 2023, Geneva.

163 Email from Muhabbat Ibrohimzoda, TNMAC, 3 October 2024.

164 Emails from Muhabbat Ibrohimzoda, TNMAC, 17 April and 3 October 2024; Faiz Mohammad Paktian, NPA, 8 May and 18 August 2024; Saynurridin Kalandarov, UST, 7 May and 7 August 2024; and Article 7 Report (covering 2023), Form F.

165 Email from Muhabbat Ibrohimzoda, TNMAC, 3 October 2024.

166 Emails from Muhabbat Ibrohimzoda, TNMAC, 17 April and 3 October 2024; Faiz Mohammad Paktian, NPA, 8 May and 18 August 2024; Saynurridin Kalandarov, UST, 7 May and 6 August 2024; and Article 7 Report (covering 2023), Form F.

167 Email from Muhabbat Ibrohimzoda, TNMAC, 11 April 2023.

Tajikistan added 607,807m² of CHAs to the national database in 2023,¹⁶⁸ a slight decrease on the 617,971m² added in 2022.¹⁶⁹ Of the 607,807m² added in 2023, 90,000 was added by HDC MoD, 256,000m² was recorded by UST,¹⁷⁰ and 261,807m² was recorded by NPA.¹⁷¹

Though land release through TS decreased overall in 2023, NPA notes that it increased its TS output by just over 0.17km² in 2023 compared to 2022. This was as a result of conducting more targeted and systematic TS in one minefield, whose size proved much larger than in the original task order.¹⁷²

Table 5: Release of mined area through NTS in 2023¹⁷³

Region	District	Operator	SHAs cancelled	Area cancelled (m ²)
Region of Republican Subordination	Rasht	HDC MoD	1	123,063
Khatlon	Panj	NPA	1	5,424
	Farkhor	UST	1	2,379
	Hamadoni	UST	1	9,000
	Jaykhun	UST	1	200,000
		UST	1	50,000
		UST	1	15,000
		UST	1	7,000
	Panj	UST	1	10,000
	Shahritus	UST	1	30,000
Totals			10	451,866

Table 6: Release of mined area through TS in 2023¹⁷⁴

Region	District	Operator	Area reduced (m ²)
Khatlon	Panj	NPA	19,308
	Panj	HDC MoD	49,575
	Jayhun	NPA	184,240
	Farkhor	UST	11,321
	Hamadoni	FSD	11,953
	Sh. Shohin	HDC MoD	52,755
GBAO	Darvoz	NPA	53,929
Region of Republican Subordination	Rasht	HDC MoD	19,320
Total			402,401

CLEARANCE IN 2023

Tajikistan cleared 413,791m² in 2023,¹⁷⁵ a decrease on the 579,922m² cleared in 2022.¹⁷⁶ TNMAC and operators reported clearance operations resulted in destruction of 1,121 AP mines and 33 items of UXO.¹⁷⁷ A further six AP mines were destroyed in spot tasks by NPA.¹⁷⁸

¹⁶⁸ Emails from Muhabbat Ibrohimzoda, TNMAC, 17 April 2024; Saynurridin Kalandarov, UST, 7 May and 6 August 2024; and Faiz Mohammad Paktian, NPA, 18 August 2024.

¹⁶⁹ Email from Muhabbat Ibrohimzoda, TNMAC, 31 March 2023; and Article 7 Report (covering 2022), Form D.

¹⁷⁰ Email from Muhabbat Ibrohimzoda, TNMAC, 3 October 2024.

¹⁷¹ Email from Faiz Mohammad Paktian, NPA, 18 August 2024.

¹⁷² Email from Faiz Mohammad Paktian, NPA, 8 May 2024.

¹⁷³ Emails from Muhabbat Ibrohimzoda, TNMAC, 17 April and 3 October 2024; Faiz Mohammad Paktian, NPA, 8 May 2024; and Saynurridin Kalandarov, UST, 7 May and 6 August 2024; and Article 7 Report (covering 2023), Form F.

¹⁷⁴ Emails from Muhabbat Ibrohimzoda, TNMAC, 17 April and 3 October 2024; and Faiz Mohammad Paktian, NPA, 8 May and 9 August 2024; and Article 7 Report (covering 2023), Form F.

¹⁷⁵ Email from Muhabbat Ibrohimzoda, TNMAC, 3 October 2024.

¹⁷⁶ Article 7 Report (covering 2022), Form F.

¹⁷⁷ Emails from Muhabbat Ibrohimzoda, TNMAC, 17 April and 3 October 2024; and Faiz Mohammad Paktian, NPA, 8 May and 9 August 2024.

¹⁷⁸ Emails from Faiz Mohammad Paktian, NPA, 8 May 2024; and Muhabbat Ibrohimzoda, TNMAC, 17 April 2024.

Along with minefield clearance in 2023, Tajikistan cleared two battle areas covering 572,426m².¹⁷⁹

Table 7: AP mine clearance in 2023¹⁸⁰

Region	District	Operator	CHAs cleared	Area cleared (m ²)	AP mines destroyed	UXO destroyed
Khatlon	Hamadoni	FSD	*1	9,548	194	0
			1	7,022	0	2
Khatlon	Panj	HDC MoD	*1	122,110	361	0
Region of Republican Subordination	Rasht	HDC MoD	1	19,580	3	0
Khatlon	Sh. Shohin	HDC MoD	*3	102,897	41	26
VKMB (GBAO)	Darvoz	NPA	1	8,547	6	0
Khatlon	Jayhun	NPA	1	113,469	258	0
Khatlon	Panj	NPA	3	14,183	16	1
Khatlon	Sh. Shohin	NPA	*1	12,635	242	4
Khatlon	Farkhor	UST	1	3,800	0	0
Totals			128	413,791	1,121	33

* These tasks were suspended as at the end of 2023.

DEMINER SAFETY

TNMAC reports that one HDC deminer was injured during clearance in Tajikistan in 2023, receiving a burn and another slight injury to his right hand. The accident involved a PMN-2 type AP mine with a booby-trapped ML-7. It was investigated by the MoD and TNMAC in accordance with the NMAS. Recommendations to reduce risk were then given to all demining organisations during a technical meeting and operators updated their SOPs accordingly.¹⁸¹

ARTICLE 5 DEADLINE AND COMPLIANCE



Under Article 5 of the APMBC (and in accordance with the latest extension granted by States Parties in 2019), Tajikistan is required to destroy all AP mines in mined areas under its jurisdiction or control as soon as possible, but not later than 31 December 2025. It will not meet this deadline.

In June 2023, Tajikistan restated its commitment to meet its obligations and ensure the safety of its people. However, taking into account the lack of additional funding, and the continuation of Tajikistan discovering new, previously unrecorded minefields each year, it expected to submit a further extension request.¹⁸² In November 2023, Tajikistan

confirmed to States Parties that it expects to request a five-year extension to its current 2025 deadline.¹⁸³

An immediate challenge to achieving Tajikistan's current extension request targets is the need to further increase capacity, though it has made steady progress on this since its extension request called for the mine action programme to double the number of deminers from 90 in 2019 to 180. Continued expansion of capacity to meet Tajikistan's Article 5 obligations will in turn depend on increased donor funding. Overall funding has remained heavily dependent on the US Department of State since 2019 and TNMAC has acknowledged

¹⁷⁹ Article 7 Report (covering 2023), Form F.

¹⁸⁰ Emails from Muhabbat Ibrohimzoda, TNMAC, 17 April 2024; Faiz Mohammad Paktian, NPA, 8 May and 9 August 2024; and Nickwah Din Mohammed, FSD, 11 April and 16 August 2024; and Article 7 Report (covering 2023), Form F.

¹⁸¹ Email from Muhabbat Ibrohimzoda, TNMAC, 17 April 2024; and Statement of Tajikistan on Victim Assistance, 21MSP, 20-24 November 2023, Geneva.

¹⁸² Statement of Tajikistan on Article 5 Implementation, Interseasonal Meetings, Geneva, 19-21 June 2023.

¹⁸³ Statement of Tajikistan on Article 5 Implementation, 21MSP, Geneva, 20-24 November 2023.

it needs to attract other donors.¹⁸⁴ It remains to be seen if the Individualised Approach, initiated by Tajikistan to the 21MSP in November 2023 yields further support.

The accessibility of Tajikistan's remaining mined areas, and a lack of equipment needed to tackle them, presents a potentially significant challenge to implementation. For example, some of the minefields still to be surveyed are located in remote, mountainous areas where conditions only permit 40 operational days a year.¹⁸⁵ Tajikistan's last Article 5 deadline extension request noted that the progress of survey was slowing because survey teams had already tackled areas that are most accessible to the local population and were increasingly left with hazardous areas in remote and rugged terrain.¹⁸⁶ In the last few years Tajikistan has repeatedly stated that difficult terrain, harsh weather conditions, natural disasters such as rockfalls, avalanches and landslides, as well as dense vegetation, have proved operationally challenging.

Tajikistan has also expressed the need for more equipment, including cross-country vehicles, metal detectors, deminer and EOD toolkits, personal protective equipment (PPE), spare parts for mechanical demining machines, and medical supplies,¹⁸⁷ as well as technical support to maintain its mechanical assets.¹⁸⁸ Intermittent insecurity along the Tajik-Afghan border has further impacted progress in Tajikistan's extension period, impeding access to some of Tajikistan's most heavily mined districts, with survey plans severely disrupted in the second half of 2021 for example.¹⁸⁹ While this issue did not hinder operations in 2023,¹⁹⁰ TNMAC cautions this may affect implementation in the future.¹⁹¹

Tajikistan also does not yet know the full extent of the contamination it needs to address, including significant SHAs along its border with Uzbekistan, progress on which depends on the completing of delineation of the border. As previously outlined, progress has been made, with a protocol between the two countries signed in May 2024.¹⁹² Although Tajikistan originally aimed to complete all required survey and re-survey of hazardous areas by the end of 2023¹⁹³ it now aims to complete remaining survey, excluding the 54 SHAs in Sughd province, bordering Uzbekistan, by the end of 2025.¹⁹⁴

Despite having a well-coordinated and planned programme with strong national ownership, the challenges outlined above, the lack of additional funding, and the continuing discovery of previously unrecorded minefields have severely impeded Tajikistan's capacity to fulfil its commitments under its Article 5 deadline of the end of 2025. The clearer understanding of remaining contamination that Tajikistan now hopes to achieve by then will form the basis of future planning.

Table 8: Five-year summary of AP mine clearance

Year	Area cleared (km ²)
2023	0.41
2022	0.58
2021	0.21
2020	0.67
2019	0.54
Total	2.41

PLANNING FOR MANAGEMENT OF RESIDUAL CONTAMINATION

Tajikistan is taking measures to prepare for the management of residual risk upon completion. In March 2022, with the support of the OSCE, an adviser for residual risk management took up post, tasked with identifying improvements to the risk management of explosive hazards and to develop residual risk management guidelines to complement the NMAS.¹⁹⁵ Since the introduction of this post a technical manual on residual risk management has been produced, which TNMAC highlights as a legal prerequisite before any further work can progress. With this step completed, TNMAC asserted that the issue of residual risk management would receive higher prioritisation in 2023.¹⁹⁶ TNMAC highlights that residual risk management is discussed during monthly technical meetings with implementing partners, and that recommendations are reflected in the annual General Land Release Operations Plans.¹⁹⁷

184 Additional information provided in 2019 Article 5 deadline Extension Request, p. 7; and Statement of Tajikistan on Article 5 Implementation, Intersessional Meetings, Geneva, 19–21 June 2023.

185 Presentation by Tajikistan on Article 5 deadline Extension Request, Intersessional Meetings, Geneva, 23 May 2019; and Article 7 Report (covering 2021).

186 2019 Article 5 deadline Extension Request, p. 47.

187 Presentation by Muhabbat Ibrohimzoda, TNMAC, Intersessional Meetings, Geneva, 22 June 2022; and Statements of Tajikistan, Intersessional Meetings, Geneva, 19–21 June 2023 and 18–20 June 2024.

188 Article 7 Report (covering 2023), Form F.

189 Presentation by Tajikistan on Article 5 deadline Extension Request, Intersessional Meetings, Geneva, 23 May 2019; and Statement of Tajikistan, Intersessional Meetings, Geneva, 19–21 June 2023.

190 Email from Faiz Mohammad Paktian, NPA, 8 May 2024.

191 Email from Muhabbat Ibrohimzoda, TNMAC, 17 April 2024.

192 "Tajikistan and Uzbekistan discussed border demarcation – a protocol signed", *Central Asian Light*, 6 May 2024; and "Uzbek-Tajik demarcation commission held a meeting in Dushanbe", *KUN.UZ*, 4 May 2024.

193 Emails from Muhabbat Ibrohimzoda, TNMAC, 19 June 2022 and 11 April 2023.

194 Email from Muhabbat Ibrohimzoda, TNMAC, 17 April 2024.

195 Emails from Saodat Asadova, OSCE, 3 June 2022; and Muhabbat Ibrohimzoda, TNMAC, 19 June 2022; and Statement of Tajikistan on Article 5 Implementation, Intersessional Meetings, Geneva, 19–21 June 2023.

196 Email from Saodat Asadova, OSCE, 30 March 2023.

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