Sinjar/Telafar HMA impact evaluation

Mine Action in NW Iraq (Sinjar and Telafar districts) post ISIS with a focus on urban areas – impact, challenges and best practices

Terms of Reference – 30/11/2023

Background and rationale

MAG has been conducting clearance of explosive ordnance in Northwest Iraq (Ninewa Governorate) since 2015, with the expulsion of ISIS from the area. MAG has provided a comprehensive mine action response including in the districts of Telafar since June 2015 and in Sinjar since August 2016. MAG has worked in 103 communities (and completed clearance in 90 with a population of nearly 118,000 persons), 21,797 community members were recorded as direct beneficiaries. MAG has released nearly 33 square kilometres of land (of which 19,365,765 square metres of land cleared and the rest reduced), destroyed 18,689 mines and other explosive ordnance (EO) devices (out of which 8,931 during land release and 9,758 by EOD), making areas safe for returns and resumption of key services. Almost 20,000 EO Risk Education (RE) sessions reached nearly 300,000 RE beneficiaries; data were registered and passed on to the authorities from 235 EO accidents, claiming 334 victims.

Mine action in these areas includes working in rural and in urban areas; of the 90 communities cleared, "Rapid Clearance Impact Assessments" (RCIA) were done in 19 communities (15 in S +4 in T) on 38 tasks (31+7) starting from January 2021, out of which 16 tasks (13 Sinjar, 3 Telafar) involved some type of urban clearance [ref. RCIA list]. MAG is currently undertaking a 'Comprehensive Clearance Impact Assessment' in Ninewah using a cluster sampling approach. Out of 30 communities, 21 are in Sinjar and Telafar (14 and 7). Working in urban areas can be more resource intensive and time consuming as mechanical assets are often required to process unsafe rubble and clearance and clearance becomes three-dimensional, e.g., in multi-storey buildings. The improvised contamination overlaid with conventional unexploded ordnance brings an additional layer of complexity in operations in NW Iraq. In 2019, MAG Iraq estimated that clearance of explosive ordnance in urban settings was six times more expensive than similar work done in rural areas. This study will review this number against a larger dataset.

When towns and cities see huge levels of destruction and civilians start returning once hostilities have ceased in an area, a particular challenge is the prioritisation of clearance tasks. In post-conflict contexts, prioritisation is done based on consultations with local communities and key stakeholders. Furthermore, all tasking is ultimately at the discretion of the national authorities. However, when the conflict drives away the civilian population, there is pressure to respond quickly and there are few people to consult on the location of contamination and community priorities. MAG tested the use of satellite imagery in Sinjar in 2020 to analyse contamination levels and to inform prioritisation.

Sinjar and Telafar are home to diverse ethnic and religious groups including Yazidi, Arab, and Turkmen populations, some of which endured extreme levels of violence during the ISIS occupation. A conflict sensitive approach towards any type of humanitarian or development action is required. For example, issues related to Housing, Land & Properties were addressed in MAG's mine action support to Iraq's NW. MAG hired female deminers and its community liaison teams are gender-mixed, an approach that is challenging social norms in this part of the world.

MAG has undertaken impact assessments of EORE and of land release in NW Iraq. This data will inform the study.

Over the past 8+ years MAG has surveyed nearly all of the known hazardous areas in the two districts of Sinjar and Telafar. MAG is not the only HMA provider, also G4S, SHO (Shareteah Humanitarian Organization) and GCS (Global Clearance Solutions) did clearance; EORE was also delivered by DRC/DDG and HI as well as Iraqi NGOs IHSCO and a Baghdad-based organization. Some areas were cleared by Peshmerga and/or Iraq's military. Clearance is nearing completion, leaving three main questions to be addressed: what are the remaining needs, what are challenges to reach completion, and which lessons can be learned to reach completion?

Available resources:

Already in July 2015, MAG conducted a 'Rapid contamination assessment'[1] in Telafar district, assessing 142 accessible villages, out of which nearly half reported confirmed EO contamination. This data informed the mine action response in joint consultations with the local authorities.

MAG in 2020 conducted a study in Sinjar city, called the Urban Approach Pilot,[2] using satellite imagery comparing pre-post conflict imagery by applying machine learning to assist with planning and prioritisation of mine action interventions.

MAG, also in 2020, conducted an internal evaluation of the Bureau for Humanitarian Assistance/ United States Agency for International Development-funded EORE programme in MAG Iraq; it focused on five communities including two from Sinjar district.[3]

GICHD in 2020-21 undertook research on IED clearance in the area with MAG support and published an IED Clearance Good Practice Guide in 2021.[4]

Humanity & Inclusion (HI) in 2021 conducted a comprehensive study in Sinjar district on the impact of EO contamination that was published in English, Arabic, and French.[5]

ITAD conducted a study commissioned by the UK Government/FCDO at the end of 2021 on stabilisation and the role of mine action;[6] one of its three case studies included Sinjar with a focus on Borek, a small town that had been cleared by MAG in 2017.

This study will ensure to reference the above listed studies among other sources.

Research objectives:

Focusing on Sinjar and Telafar districts this study will cover both, urban and rural areas, some of which include 'urban clearance' of residential complexes, for example. It will focus on risk reduction

[1] MAG 2015, Rapid Assessment of Explosive Remnants of War (ERW) Contamination in Northern Ninewah Governorate [MAG internal document].
[2] MAG 2020, Urban Approach Pilot: Threat imagery and information analysis, Preparing for humanitarian mine action engagement in complex urban environments.
[3] BHA/USAID 2020, Evaluation of EORE programming, MAG Iraq, EMERGENCY RISK EDUCATION, CONTAMINATION SURVEYS AND STRENGTHENING VICTIM ASSISTANCE TO SUPPORT PROTECTION NEEDS OF RETURNEES, INTERNALLY DISPLACED PERSONS AND CONFLICT AFFECTED POPULATIONS BY MITIGATING RISKS FROM EXPLOSIVE HAZARDS AND SUPPORTING VICTIM ASSISTANCE.
[4] GICHD 2021: IED Clearance Good Practice Guide, https://www.gichd.org/our-response/mine-action-standards/improvised-explosive-device-clearance-good-practice-guide/ , available in English, French and Arabic.
[5] HI 2021, No safe recovery: The impact of Explosive Ordnance contamination on affected populations in Iraq
[6] E-Pact/UK Aid 2022, Global Mine Action Programme 2 (GMAP2), Exploring Mine Action's potential in stabilisation and peacebuilding contexts.

via EO risk education and clearance (both land release and EOD) and assessing the impact this has had for the local population and for local authorities to rebuild the two districts.

MAG proposes to assess the following:

1. **Impact of Mine Action post ISIS**: assess the impact of EO clearance on reconstruction efforts and durable solutions in NW Iraq, assess the impact of EORE and how it contributes to safer behaviour and to enabling; include assessing any potential unintended consequences of mine action;
2. **Completion of EO clearance:** Assess the needs required to complete EO clearance in NW Iraq (Sinjar and Telafar districts), discuss challenges and constraints;
3. **Urban mine action:** Identify challenges and constraints, document lessons learned and provide recommendations on conducting MA including survey and prioritising mine action operations in urban areas compared to rural areas. Assess the resources required to conduct clearance in urban areas compared to rural areas.

This study will assess communities cleared from all known explosive ordnance and specific urban sites cleared by MAG and by other mine action organizations in NW Iraq, Sinjar and Telafar districts to document the impact after clearance. While the NW Iraq context presents a significant level of complexity due to the improvised contamination laid by Daesh which overlaps with conventional ordnance, the study should highlight common challenges and provide useful lessons learned that can be applied in the mine action response in other conflict-affected areas with a focus on towns and cities.

Iraq being a State party to the APMBC and the CCM, has obligations towards clearing all known contaminated areas. Given the significant amount of clearance work that has been done to date, this study aims to assess what remains to be done, applying all-reasonable effort. Note, Iraq is also a High-Contracting Party to the CCW and its Protocol IIa and V.

The study will also provide useful lessons that can be reflected on in the implementation of the Political Declaration on Explosive Weapons in Populated Areas (EWIPA).

Audience and use of findings

- Assessing the humanitarian impact of EO risk education and of EO clearance will highlight the importance of mine action to **donors and the broader international community** and demonstrate the enabling character of this work for other stabilisation, recovery and development activities.
- Quantifying the costs of mine action in urban areas compared to rural areas will contribute to **advocacy by MAG and other advocacy organisations** for avoidance of explosive weapons in populated areas.
- Capturing lessons learned on prioritisation of clearance will help inform future responses of **mine action stakeholders** in populated areas.

Research methods

- Desktop research
- Impact assessment study on a sample of tasks cleared by MAG and other operators in Sinjar and Telafar to determine changes in land/property use and benefits for the community following clearance.
    - *Can use MAG's existing Impact Assessment data and do targeted follow up surveys*

- Comparative analysis of clearance costs for urban and rural areas/tasks based on data from MAG (potentially including other HMA operators) in Iraq.
    - *MAG can determine the formula for calculations and ask other partners to do the same, then use an average across all HMA operators. See Iraq programme calculations from 2019.*
- Conduct qualitative interviews with mine action stakeholders engaged in Sinjar and Telafar between 2015-23 to identify best practices and lessons learned on prioritising and adjusting mine action activities - including to urban context.
    - This should include:
        - Representatives of civilian authorities/NMAAs (IKMAA until 2017; DMA from 2017)
        - MAG senior management
        - Technical, CL and project management staff from MAG, SHO, and EORE providers
        - MAG IM staff
    - *The aim is to identify recommendations, strategies and approaches that may be useful in similar contexts, not to create any technical guidelines. Findings shall be presented and discussed in a forum including government, donors and other MA stakeholders, possibly in Baghdad.*

Research questions

Listed here are only initial questions by the core areas to be addressed. The consultancy will need to provide an in-depth approach to the study and the questions it will address.

1. Impact of Mine Action post ISIS, assess the impact of EO clearance on reconstruction efforts and durable solutions in NW Iraq, assess the impact of EORE and how it contributes to safer behaviour and to enabling; include assessing any potential unintended consequences of mine action

This part of the study aims to evaluate the consequences and effectiveness of mine action initiatives post ISIS. It will need to be broken down into sub-questions targeting specific impact areas, e.g., on local communities, on returnee populations, on economic revival.
It should assess impacts of both clearance and EORE. While most evidence will be available on MAG's contribution the approach should include other MA operators as well.

Sub-questions might include:

- What is the impact of clearance of EO contamination in Sinjar and Telafar districts of Ninewa governorate on reconstruction and durable solutions?
- Have there been any unintended consequences resulting from EO clearance?
- What is the impact of EORE on safer behaviour and supporting clearance?
- Have there been any unintended consequences resulting from EORE?
- How has community engagement been carried out, what was its effectiveness, have community perceptions influenced mine action efforts?

2. Completion of EO clearance: Assess the needs required to complete EO clearance in NW Iraq (Sinjar and Telafar districts), discuss challenges and constraints

Assess what the known remaining EO threat is. Which areas have been hard to access? Have all areas been fully surveyed?

While completion of known contaminated areas is the goal, mine action has to ensure long-term sustainability of mine action efforts. Investigating the endurance of mine action initiatives is important. It would be beneficial to explore what measures are being put in place to ensure long-term safety and whether there's a plan for ongoing community education and involvement. Who will address any residual EO threat?

3. Urban mine action: Identify challenges and constraints, document lessons learned and provide recommendations on conducting MA including survey and prioritising mine action operations in urban areas compared to rural areas. Assess the resources required to conduct clearance in urban areas compared to rural areas

This area aims to explore the specific hurdles faced in urban settings as opposed to rural or less populated areas. To assess it, one might narrow in on specific types of challenges (e.g., logistical, technical (urban clearance, rubble removal/recycling), community engagement (Non-technical Survey, EORE, etc), security issues.

Comparing differences in urban and rural mine action approaches will require a deeper exploration of contextual differences between urban and rural settings. Including questions about adapting strategies based on these contexts can provide more actionable insights.

Documenting successful strategies and best practices: Focusing on what has worked well, this question is essential for future planning. It could be enriched by identifying case studies of particularly successful interventions and by querying the reasons behind their success.

- How to prioritise clearance of tasks before communities return (and under the pressure of imminent returns)?
- How to use data from other sources (satellite data, civilian harm data, explosive weapons use data) to inform emergency mine action response?
- Are there any innovative approaches that can be used in mine action responses in populated areas that can maximise the efficiency of operations and enhance protection of civilians?
- How much does it cost (time, funding) to clear in populated/ built up areas compared to open land?

Key sources and people to be consulted

Direct consultations/interviews:

- Communities in EO-affected populated areas and in areas that have benefitted from EO clearance.
- MA authorities and national/regional/local government.
- Key technical, community liaison and programme staff that work(ed) with mine action operators in NW Iraq.
- Satellite data/mapping specialists (MAG ODT, GICHD, IMMAP)
- HLP documentation/guidance MAG/NRC

Secondary sources:

- See above
- MAG GTS 08.10.10 TN on Survey in Urban Areas
- GICHD, 2019, unpublished, Community Liaison – Case Studies Report Cambodia and Iraq

- HLP AoR resources

Style and length of report

- External-facing report, relevant for technical mine action specialists, but easy to read by non-experts. 20-30 pages max, plus annex

Research management/responsibilities

- **Full time research consultant** (to be recruited) to conduct the following:
    - Present research protocol/approach as part of application
    - Desktop research
    - Recruit and train enumerators [for community level surveys, TBD]
    - Conduct analysis of impact assessment data
    - Conduct qualitative interviews
    - Conduct cost analysis with input from technical staff and finance team
    - Write report
    - Present findings internally
    - Present findings at workshop in Baghdad, TBC
- **MAG lead: Head of Programme Performance & Learning** to oversee the project and support the research consultant, field visit during research
- **MAG support: Senior Technical Advisor,** field visit during research
- **MAG Iraq Information Management & Systems Coordinator** to conduct satellite data analysis and support development of conclusions and recommendations for the report.
- **Enumerators** to collect impact assessment data (*N.B. Could also ask for support of MAG's CL teams + additional enumerators, to be discussed with CLM-TL + consultant at the start of the project).*
- **MAG Iraq team** to support with accommodating consultants as required and facilitating meetings and workshops
- HQ Comms team to support with report presentation and design.

Timetable

	Nov-23	**Dec-23**	**Jan-24**	**Feb-24**	**Mar-24**	**Apr-22**	**May-22**	**Jun-22**	**Jul-22**
Finalise TOR									
Recruitment of research consultant									
Stakeholder workshop, initial									
Desktop research									
Training of enumerators									
Impact assessments									
Qualitative interviews									
Data analysis									
Report writing									
Stakeholder workshop (Baghdad)									
Report review, sign-off, design									
Report launch									

Calculation of consultancy days against deliverables:

Activity	**Deliverable**	**Consultancy Days Lead**	**Cons. Days Second person**
Desktop research	Inception report [max 5 pages]	2 weeks; 10 days [for first 3 deliverables]	2 weeks; 10 days
Stakeholder workshop (pre)	Preparation/logistics/facilitation. Workshop report [2 pages]		
Training of enumerators	Training materials, daily participants attendance sheet, report, certificates		
Impact assessments	Accompany CL-teams during CCIA interviews; daily protocols*	2 weeks; 10 days [for 2 deliverables]	2 weeks; 10 days
Qualitative interviews	Join/supervise enumerators during interviews;* notes, findings on each interview		
Data analysis	Report with data analyses	5 days	5 days
Report writing (preliminary)	Initial report [30 pages max + annex]	7 days	7 days
Stakeholder workshop (final in Baghdad)**	Preparation/logistics/facilitation Workshop report [up to 5 pages]	3 days	8 days
Report review, sign-off, design	Final consultancy report [30 pages max + annex]	5 days	
Total days		**40**	**40**

Add pictures as evidence on activities undertaken as relevant and feasible.

*Note: Due to access issues, it is expected that the only the second consultant goes to the field. Lead consultant applications who are not currently residents of Iraq should only plan to work remotely and/or only visit Erbil and Baghdad (MAG's head office is in Erbil with a liaison office in Baghdad) and should consider time required to secure a visa as part of their proposal [for nationalities who cannot obtain visa upon arrival one can process a regular visa application for 2 months and it will take 3-4 weeks to process].

Requirements

Lead consultant:

- Experience in conducting research, evaluations, writing reports - preferably in Iraq
- Excellent English skills, Arabic skills are a plus
- Leading field research, experience in data analysis
- Experience in workshop facilitation and provision of training

Second consultant:

- Iraqi national or Arab speaker living in Iraq with local knowledge
- Proficient English skills
- Experience in conducting field research, experience in data analysis
- Experience in organising workshops, co-facilitation
- Experience in the provision of training is a plus

Applications need to include a cover letter, CV, and proposal how you would undertake this research/evaluation. Not more than 5 pages please, including a budget for the lead and the second

person, cost for visa, international travel, hotel accommodation; in addition, CVs, track record, etc. MAG will support with local travel and cover the cost for convening the two seminars.

Payments will be done in three instalments against written request: 40% after submission of deliverables against the initial 10 days, another 40% against submission of the preliminary report, and the remainder of 20% upon successful completion.

[End]