

Summative Evaluation

MAG's Humanitarian Mine Action
Multi-Country Programme 2022–2025
funded by the Government of Norway



Acknowledgment

The Mines Advisory Group (MAG) and the external evaluation team express their utmost gratitude to the people and institutions that so generously collaborated by sharing data, experiences, resources, and expert feedback.

Without key informants’ willingness to transparently share information and offer valuable insights, the evaluation would not have been possible. Key informants included:

- MAG personnel from different programmes subject to this evaluation as well as from regional programmes and MAG’s headquarter.
- The beneficiaries from Arab Salim, Arnoun, Baaloul, and Mhaidse village in Lebanon; from Dialankine, Kandiadiou and Katouré village in Senegal; and from Maankulam town, Othiyamalai village, and the Maankulam Base Hospital in Sri Lanka.
- Community Focal Points (CFPs) and teachers trained by MAG in Syria, and CFPs trained by MAG in Burkina Faso.
- The National or Regional Mine Action Authorities (NMAAs) from Burkina Faso,

Guinea-Bissau, the Kurdistan Region of Iraq (KRI), Lebanon, Mauritania, Northeast Syria, the Republic of Iraq, Senegal, Sri Lanka, and Zimbabwe.

- Other stakeholders in the different MAG programmes including in Burkina Faso: Action Contre la Faim (ACF), Action Solidaire et Développement (ASD), and Danish Refugee Council (DRC). In Cambodia: The Mine Action Planning Unit (MAPU) of Ratanakiri Province. In Iraq: Shareteah Humanitarian Organization (SHO). In Lebanon: DRC, Amel Association International, Terre des Hommes (TDH), and United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF). In Myanmar: The Mine Action Area of Responsibility (MA AoR). In Niger: Enabel Belgian Development Agency. In Senegal: Embassy of Norway, Fight for Humanity, Humanity & Inclusion (HI), Radio Number One Casamance, United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), Ziguinchor region authorities. In Syria: Ashna for Development and HI. In Zimbabwe: Mudzi Rural District Council.

MAG would also like to thank the Norwegian government for generously providing the funding enabling this evaluation.

This publication has been produced with financial support from Norway. The contents of this publication are the sole responsibility of MAG and can in no way be taken to reflect the views of the Government of Norway.

Contents

Abbreviations & Acronyms 4

Foreword8

Executive summary9

Introduction 13

Methodology 16

Findings: Relevance and effectiveness 19

Findings: Coordination and collaboration.....34

Findings: Efficiency43

Findings: National ownership and sustainability 51

Findings: Cross-cutting principles with a focus on gender 56

Conclusion: Lessons learned and recommendations..... 62

Annexes67

Annex A: Case studies Lebanon, Senegal, and Sri Lanka 68

Annex B: Complete Overview of Project Goals, Outcomes, Outputs and Priority Evaluation Criteria per Programme 74

Annex C: Complete List of KIIs and FGDs conducted 80

Annex D: MAG HMA Theory of Change 82

Notes 83

Abbreviations & Acronyms

ACF	Action Contre la Faim
ADS	Animal Detection Systems
ADS (BF)	Action Solidaire et Développement
AoR	Area of Responsibility
APMBC	Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention
BAC	Battle Area Clearance
CBA	Contamination Baseline Assessment
CCM	Convention on Cluster Munitions
CEOBS	The Conflict and Environment Observatory
CFP	Community Focal Point
CHA	Confirmed Hazardous Area
CMAC	Cambodian Mine Action Centre
CMR	Cluster Munition Remnants
CCW	Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons
DMA	Directorate of Mine Action
DRC	Danish Refugee Council
EO	Explosive Ordnance
EOD	Explosive Ordnance Disposal
EORE	Explosive Ordnance Risk Education
ERW	Explosive Remnants of War
EU	European Union
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
FSD	Fondation Suisse de Déminage
GDI	Gender, Diversity and Inclusion

GICHD	Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining
HD R&D	Humanitarian Demining Research and Development Program
HI	Humanity & Inclusion
HMA	Humanitarian Mine Action
ICBL	International Campaign to Ban Landmines
IDP	Internally Displaced Persons
IM	Information Management
IMAS	International Mine Action Standards
IMS	Information Management System
IKMAA	Iraqi Kurdistan Mine Action Agency
IMAS	International Mine Action Standards
IOM	International Organization for Migration
KII	Key Informant Interview
KRI	The Kurdistan Region of Iraq
LMAC	Lebanon Mine Action Centre
LR	Land Release
LTTE	Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam
MA	Mine Action
MAG	Mines Advisory Group
MAPU	Mine Action Planning Unit
MEAL	Monitoring, Evaluation, Accountability and Learning
MoD	Ministry of Defence
MoHA	Ministry of Home Affairs
MSP	Meeting of States Parties

NES	Northeast Syria
NESMAC	Northeast Syria Mine Action Centre
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
NMAA	National Mine Action Authority
NMAS	National Mine Action Standards
NMFA	Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Norad	Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation
NPA	Norwegian People’s Aid
NSA	Non-State Armed Actor
NTS	Non-Technical Survey
MDD	Mine Detection Dogs
MTT	Multi-Tasking Teams
PNDHD	Programme National de Déminage Humanitaire pour le Développement
PPCIA	Pre/Post Clearance Impact Assessments
REDS	Rake Excavation and Detection System
REPP	Risk Education Pre/Post Survey
SHARP	Skavita Humanitarian Assistance and Relief Project
SHO	Shareteah Humanitarian Organization
S&OH	Safety & Occupational Health
TDH	Terre des Hommes
TFM	Technical Field Manager
ToC	Theory of Change
TWG	Technical Working Groups
UK FCDO	United Kingdom’s Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office

UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNICEF	United Nations Children’s Fund
UNMAS	United Nations Mine Action Service
US	United States [of America]
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
UXO	Unexploded Ordnance
WAM	Weapons and Ammunitions Management
WFP	World Food Programme



Foreword

It is with great appreciation that I present this assessment of MAG's Mine Action Programme, generously funded by the Government of Norway.

The programme ran from August 2022 to December 2025 and included work across 10 MAG programmes in 14 countries: Cambodia, Central Sahel (Burkina Faso, Mali, Niger), Iraq, Laos PDR, Lebanon, Myanmar, Sri Lanka, Syria, West Africa (Guinea-Bissau, Mauritania, Senegal), and Zimbabwe.

This report offers a comprehensive overview of the programme's achievements, challenges, and lessons learnt over the course of its implementation.

Since launching this programme over three years ago, the global geopolitical landscape has undergone significant shifts and challenges. Yet throughout, Norway has remained steadfast as a global leader in humanitarian disarmament and mine action, demonstrating unwavering commitment to protecting civilians from the devastating impact of landmines and explosive remnants of war.

This support has not only enabled the clearance of contaminated land but has also

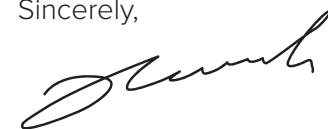
helped restore safety, dignity, and opportunity to countless communities affected by conflict.

As a strong supporter of multilateral diplomacy, Norway has also been actively engaged in the promotion and protection of the international policy instruments including the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention and the Convention on Cluster Munitions.

Through this assessment, we aim to provide transparent and evidence-based insights into the programme's effectiveness and sustainability. We hope it reflects both our accountability to our partners and our shared commitment to continuous improvement in the mine action sector.

On behalf of MAG, I extend our deepest thanks to the Norwegian government for its trust and partnership. We look forward to building on this foundation to ensure a safer future for all.

Sincerely,



Darren Cormack
Chief Executive Officer
MAG (Mines Advisory Group)



**MAG deminers
in Lebanon**

Executive Summary

This report summarises the findings and lessons learned from the evaluation of the Mines Advisory Group's (MAG's) work, implemented under the funding of the review of the considerations applied in relation.¹

The findings suggest that MAG is exceptionally responsive and flexible to ensure a beneficiary centred approach even in difficult contexts, while still achieving or overachieving the majority of the identified targets. Nevertheless, there are also lessons learned including the requirement for better targeted data collection and analysis, increased coordination and collaboration with humanitarian and development actors in support of the achievement of related outcomes (such as improved livelihoods), and potentially, a more considered approach to project design and goal setting.

The summative evaluation of MAG's interventions under the Norwegian grant (August 2022 and December 2025), included ten MAG programmes in 14 countries, and set a particular focus on activities implemented in Lebanon, Senegal, and Sri Lanka. The evaluation assessed the relevance, effectiveness and efficiency, and the extent and quality of coordination and collaboration throughout the project's implementation.

Furthermore, it was analysed to what extent the project contributed to national ownership and sustainability, and how cross-cutting principles, particularly gender, were integrated into the project's delivery. The findings presented by the independent external evaluation team are the result of a thorough desk study, key informant interviews (KIs), focus group discussions (FGDs), surveys, and field observations.

Summary of the report findings, recommendations, and conclusion

Relevance and effectiveness

Beneficiaries are consistently at the forefront of MAG's project design and operational planning. The assessed programmes are reaching the people in need and achieved the majority of the identified targets on the output level, while also producing strong outcomes.

Where feasible, MAG has chosen to intervene in underserved areas, where work is particularly challenging, multiplying the value of interventions for both beneficiaries and the donor. MAG's activities clearly reduced risk of harm from explosive ordnance (EO), increased awareness and knowledge of the risk leading to safer behaviour, and facilitated safe and productive land use, access to basic services, and freedom of movement.

MAG's work also contributed to improved livelihoods, and states' progress towards their obligations under the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention (APMBC) and the Convention on Cluster Munitions (CCM), while increasing local and/or national ownership of the contamination problem and mine action (MA) activities.

➤ Lessons learned and recommendations:

The evaluation identifies some room for improvement in project design and goal setting, which evidence suggests, in some cases, could be better aligned with certain countries' needs. To increase transparency, future projects should aim to explain clearly the basis on which priorities (e.g., MAG's Theory of Change, donors' priorities, etc.) outputs and outcomes were identified and how it was assessed that the subsequent proposed targets are feasible to achieve.

➤ Furthermore, the data collection and analysis to internally monitor progress and evaluate achievements is not always suitably targeted in alignment with the set goals. The programmes concerned are well aware of the flaws, where such exist, but in general, lack resources to adequately address them – a

problem that can be mitigated by developing the relevant skillsets on a programme or regional level, or through more guidance, support and/or oversight from MAG Manchester.

Coordination and collaboration

MAG makes positive efforts to coordinate and collaborate across and beyond the sector. In many of the programmes, MAG fulfils a proactive coordination role, supports the development of new policies, and transparently shares information with all MA stakeholders in the relevant countries. MAG also maintains consistently good relationships with local authorities in their areas of operations, which helps to ensure that MAG's activities are in line with authorities' plans and community level priorities, while also increasing the effectiveness and efficiency of MAG's activities.

However, collaboration with agencies and organisations from the broader humanitarian, development, and peacebuilding realm tends to be 'ad-hoc' and informal, rather than through institutionalised action plans. Collaboration is more consistently sought in MAG programmes that act in an emergency context, and more often in relation to non-technical activities, whereas there is less collaboration to maximise improved livelihoods or increase environmentally sustainable land use following clearance.

➤ Lessons learned and recommendations:

The importance and positive impact of coordination and collaboration cannot be overstated. MAG remains humble in delivering its outstanding work within the MA sector; in many cases collaborating significantly beyond what is the requirement to achieve outputs, and without designated budget lines – an added value for the donor and for the benefit of the MA sector in the countries concerned. However – whether justified or not – there is an expectation for the MA sector to be more interdisciplinary and integrated, including for MAG as an organisation. It is recommended that MAG – in alignment with its commitment expressed in the Theory of Change (ToC) – considers how to respond to this expectation in the



long-term on a strategic level, with guidance for programmes outlining the expected scope and scale of partnerships. Such efforts should be reflected in project design and budget lines.

Efficiency

MAG is an impressively efficient organisation. The evaluation team did not find any obvious opportunities to significantly increase efficiency throughout the assessed programmes. Where opportunities seemed apparent, these had been previously identified by MAG, but, after assessment, not further considered for good reasons.

The reasons include avoiding lowering the extent of the relevance and effectiveness of activities in favour of minor efficiency gains or legal and contextual restrictions not allowing

the exploration of more efficient methods.

➤ Lessons learned and recommendations:

MAG should continue managing the programmes in the current manner – the organisation delivers excellent value for money. However, it is recommended to improve internal learning mechanisms on a global scale to ensure important lessons learned are shared globally and used to identify any unrecognised opportunities to further maximise the use of financial resources, and to better plan for the absorption of potential future financial shocks. Furthermore, it is proposed that MAG scrutinises the relationship of programme, investment, and innovation life cycles by conducting systematic analysis on how best to balance increasing maintenance costs and decreasing productivity of aging (mechanical)

MAG EORE activity in Myanmar

assets, against the costs of new, more efficient and innovative technologies, which could, in the long term, aid in the mitigation of these expenses.

National ownership and sustainability

Through the Norwegian funding, MAG has increased local and national ownership of the contamination problem and MA activities and was particularly successful in enhancing national mine action authorities' (NMAAs) capability to respond to international treaty obligations – a feat that has not been previously achieved (to that extent) by other MA organisations. However, greater consideration is required on how to increase the sustainability of achievements in pursuit of national ownership.

While NMAAs, local implementing partners and communities are generally very receptive to, and appreciative of, the capacity development provided by MAG, the long-term impact of these activities is hampered in many cases by a lack of resources or changing priorities of the capacity development recipients. Furthermore, while MAG is investing significantly in its personnel and providing them with foundations for future life, the programmes, in general, appear to lack a clear exit strategy in terms of a programme's ultimate aim, and moreover, when it is due to cease operations.

► Lessons learned and recommendations:

It is recommended that MAG looks into broader implications of capacity development activities and when proposing activities, chooses, where possible, a holistic approach. A simple example: Capacity development in information management (IM) is only sustainable if the recipients actually have access to a working information management system (IMS) to apply their skills. In addition, more consideration should be given to the alignment of MAG's global, regional and country-level strategies: What is the purpose of MAG being in a particular country, what happens when this purpose is fulfilled, and how is the purpose aligned with regional and global goals. MAG, on a strategic level, should therefore also pursue improving the balance between responding

to particular donor priorities, and prioritising engagement in countries where MAG has sufficient leverage to make a lasting difference for affected communities.

Gender and other cross-cutting principles

Over recent years, MAG has not only invested significantly towards gender balance; it has also assimilated equality.² This assimilation has ensured gender mainstreaming throughout MAG's activities and aided the empowerment of women in beneficiary communities and partner organisations. MAG has effective safeguarding processes in place and demonstrates that conflict sensitivity is an integral part of all activities by managing to achieve and overachieve expected outputs and outcomes under difficult circumstances, with the full support of local communities.

► Lessons learned and recommendations:

While continuing to ensure and promote gender equality, MAG should now give greater emphasis on other areas of inclusion, and environmental aspects throughout its activities. While MAG clearly demonstrates awareness of both and engages in actions to increase its engagement, the organisation has not yet managed to be at the forefront of the industry. Greater focus on the inclusion of persons with disabilities including victims from mines and other explosive ordnance (EO)³ would show progress, while further engagement in linking MA with environmentally sustainable land use following clearance is an area where MAG can champion based on insights already gained.

In conclusion, MAG is assessed to be a transparent, effective, and highly efficient organisation, staffed by professional people who are passionate about their work and strive to make a positive difference for vulnerable people in underserved areas around the globe. Despite the areas of improvement identified, it is assessed that the organisation has made exemplary use of the funding provided by the Government of Norway, delivering both tangible results and ultimately, saving lives in regions ravaged by conflict and the resultant EO contamination.

1. Introduction

An external team conducted the evaluation of the Norwegian government's multi-country HMA programme, encompassing ten MAG programmes in 14 countries. The evaluation aimed to assess the relevance, effectiveness, and efficiency, as well as the extent and quality of coordination and collaboration, throughout the project's implementation. The evaluation also analysed the extent to which the projects contributed to national ownership and sustainability, and how cross-cutting principles, particularly gender, were integrated into the project's delivery.

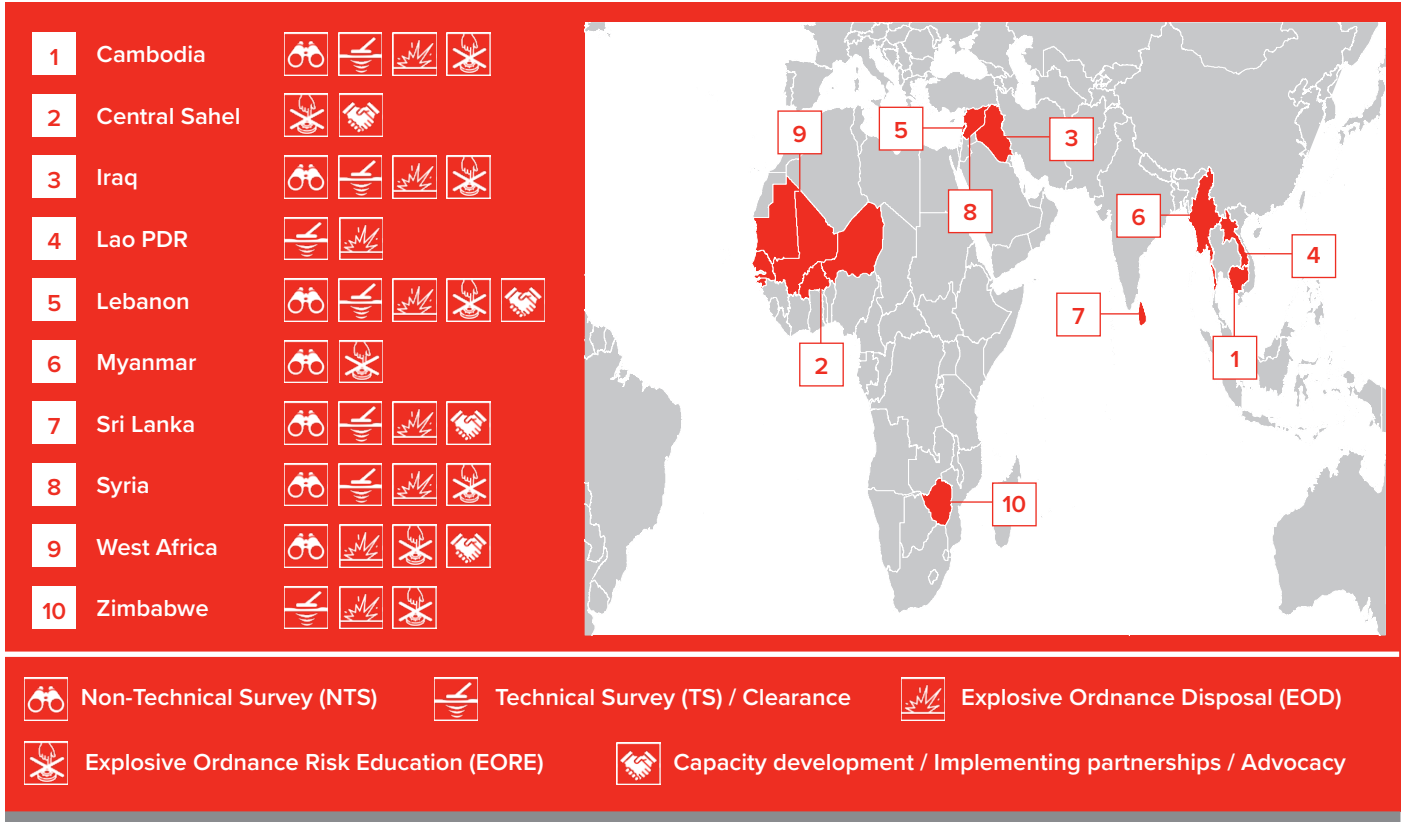


Chart 1: Overview of the MAG programmes and activities subject to the evaluation

Background information

Norway’s support included MAG’s programmes in Cambodia, Central Sahel (Burkina Faso, Mali, Niger), Iraq, Lao PDR, Lebanon, Myanmar, Sri Lanka, Syria, West Africa (Guinea-Bissau, Mauritania, Senegal) and Zimbabwe and ran from 1st August 2022 to 31st December 2025, with the length of the individual projects varying in duration.

The map above gives an overview of the Norwegian funded project activities per programme.

Despite similar project activities, the context in the concerned programmes could not be more diverse. It includes countries with well-established MA programmes (e.g., Sri Lanka) or with no national MA authority (e.g., Myanmar), with legacy contamination from past conflicts only (e.g., Cambodia), and/ or with contamination that is continuously added due to new or ongoing conflicts (e.g., Lebanon), and with differing and often multiple types of contamination including mines (e.g., Zimbabwe), improvised mines (e.g., Burkina Faso), cluster munitions (e.g., Lao PDR) or unexploded ordnance (UXO; e.g.

in Guinea-Bissau). This diversity is a particular challenge for a multi-country evaluation, as it is important to consider the vastly differing circumstances each programme is operating in, when evaluating them against the same criteria.

Scope, purpose, and criteria used for the evaluation

The evaluation, while setting a particular focus on Lebanon, Senegal, and Sri Lanka, had the following broad objectives:

- **Objective 1:** Assess the programme delivery and any achievements towards identified outputs and outcomes using the following criteria: relevance, coordination and collaboration, effectiveness, efficiency, national ownership and sustainability, and gender.
- **Objective 2:** Evaluate the integration of cross-cutting principles into programme delivery, specifically; diversity, inclusion, conflict sensitivity and environmental consideration.
- **Objective 3:** Summarise lessons learned during the implementation of this project, both at the global and individual country levels.

	Cambodia	Central Sahel	Iraq	Lao PDR	Lebanon	Myanmar	Sri Lanka	Syria	West Africa	Zimbabwe
1) Relevance & effectiveness	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
2) Coordination and collaboration	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
3) Efficiency	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
4) National ownership and sustainability		X			X		X	X	X	
5) Gender			X		X		X		X	
6) Diversity and inclusion						(X)				
7) Conflict Sensitivity			(X)		X	X				
8) Environment	(X)			(X)						

Table 1: Evaluation priorities per MAG programme to be assessed. Where the “X” is in brackets, the evaluation criteria was optional, depending on whether there were any interesting findings

Depending on the implemented activities and the outcomes and outputs identified for the different projects, the evaluation criteria utilised, priorities and evaluation questions varied. The following table gives an overview of the priorities per programme (for a complete overview, see annex A).

About this report

Structure and content: Many of the evaluation criteria cannot be viewed in isolation solely on a project level. This report therefore contains many findings which are

not only relevant for the Norwegian project but also give a reflection of the performance of the whole programme.

N.B.: Findings from key informant interviews (KIIs), focus group discussions (FGD), and MAG internal documents are not referenced in footnotes. A list of KIIs and FGDs conducted is instead added as annex c) while a complete overview of all documents assessed is available as separate annex. Furthermore, photo credits are only made where pictures have not been taken by MAG personnel or the evaluation team.

Deminers in Lao PDR



2. Methodology

To ensure credibility, MAG mandated an external team with the conduct of the evaluation, which was subsequently implemented between April and July 2025. The evaluation findings are based on a comprehensive desk study, KIs and FGDs with a broad range of stakeholders, quantitative field data collection through surveys, and field visits in the three case study countries (Lebanon, Senegal, and Sri Lanka), allowing for maximum data triangulation.



MAG at work in Lebanon

The evaluation was designed as a mixed-method study using qualitative and quantitative data to inform the ten evaluation criteria and three evaluation objectives. It focused on implementing a participatory approach that considers the existing rich data set and information previously collected by MAG (secondary data), as well as additional field data and stakeholder information collected exclusively for this evaluation (primary data), facilitating maximum data triangulation.

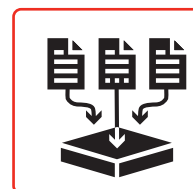
Data collection: instruments and key informants



Comprehensive desk study:

The evaluation team considered and analysed **more than 400 documents** containing qualitative information and quantitative data from MAG and other organisations. The desk analysis included a thorough analysis of

MAG's available quantitative data from Risk Education Pre/Post Surveys (REPP) and Pre/Post Clearance Impact Assessments (PPCIA).



Field data collection:

During their in-country stay in Lebanon, Senegal, and Sri Lanka, the evaluation team had the opportunity to visit

several project and post-project sites and gather first-hand information from beneficiaries and other stakeholders. In addition, the evaluation included six surveys (conducted online or through phone calls and paper forms) with community focal points (CFPs) in Burkina Faso, CFPs/teachers trained by MAG in Syria, land release (LR) beneficiaries in Lebanon, MAG employees in Iraq and Sri Lanka, the national mine action authorities (NMAAs) of the different project countries, and with the higher management / operations MAG staff in the programmes concerned.



KIs: During the three months of the evaluation, the team conducted **66 semi-structured interviews** including MAG personnel, local partners, NMAAs, United Nations (UN) agencies, researchers, the donor, country / provincial or district level authorities of the relevant countries, and others. Interviewees were selected based on their function and the subject matter expertise assessed as required to best inform the evaluation. However, it should be noted that this resulted in less than 20% of the interviewees being female.



FGDs: The team also organised 15 in-person or online **FGDs**, which included MAG's regional and headquarter's personnel, female MAG personnel in Iraq and Sri Lanka, the NMAA and beneficiaries in Lebanon, as well as with beneficiaries in Senegal and Sri Lanka. Of the participants, **61%** were women.

➤ Data collection and analysis were conducted in accordance with International Mine Action Standards (IMAS) 14.10 Guide for the Evaluation of MA Interventions, the

International Organization for Standardization (ISO) 9001 Procedure 9.1.3 on Analysis & Evaluation, and the Guidelines of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development's Development Assistance Committee (OECD DAC).⁴

Data analysis and interpretation

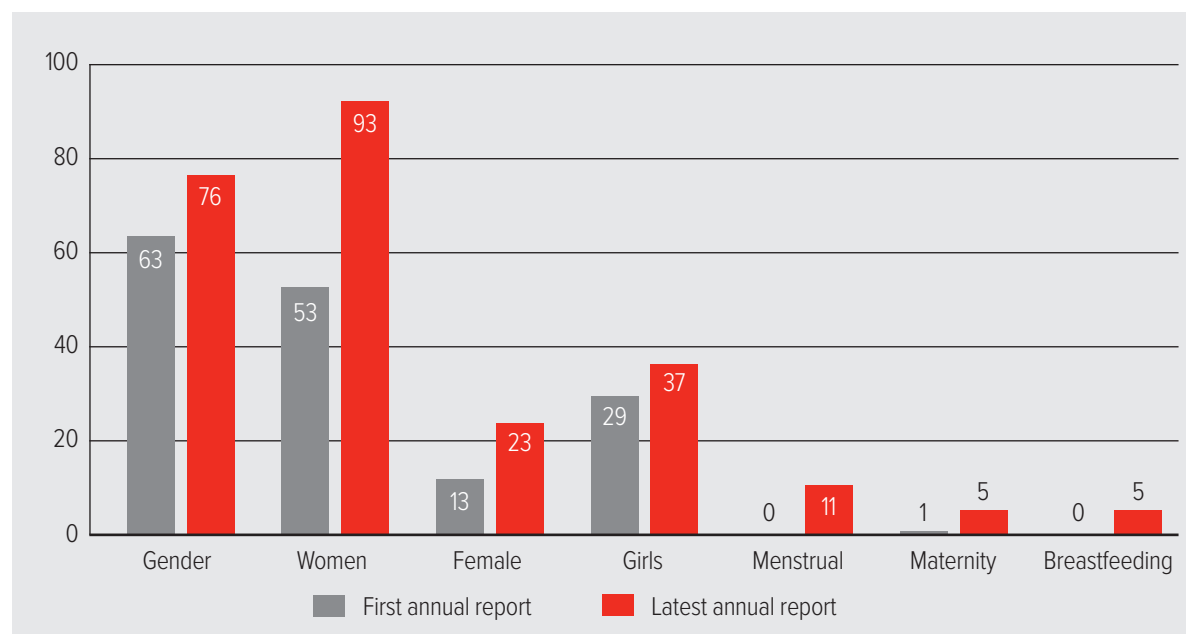
The data collected was analysed independently by two evaluators to minimise any potential bias. In addition, the evaluation team used software supported interpretation of data, including the use of artificial intelligence to enhance credibility of findings, e.g., by using word clouds and word/themes frequency statistics supporting major statements, as shown in Chart 2 below.

Challenges and constraints

While gender imbalance during KIs was an anticipated challenge (but necessarily accepted), no other constraints affected the credibility of the evaluation and the report at hand. Thanks to full transparency during the evaluation by holding weekly/ bi-weekly meetings between the evaluation team and MAG, all challenges and questions were addressed and mitigated immediately.

“There is evidence that in the MAG programmes subject to the Norwegian funding, activities relating to gender, and the mainstreaming of gender has increased throughout the duration of project implementation.” – **Statement of the evaluation team**

Chart 2: Software supporting the illustration of the frequency of gender-related themes mentioned in programmes' reporting at the beginning (grey bars) and at the end (red bars) of the Norwegian funded project, confirming an increased focus on gender, likely related to increased activities with a gender component



3. Findings: Relevance and effectiveness

Relevance and effectiveness intertwine to create the crux of programme and project delivery, working as key determinants of whether planned interventions respond to identified needs and priorities, and succeed in achieving the expected outputs and outcomes. Throughout this evaluation, the assessed country programmes have demonstrated well targeted interventions: MAG is working in the right places and delivers activities aligned with the needs of the population. However, an identified area of improvement across programmes is the quality of outcome, output, and target setting, the subsequent collection and analysis of data feeding the outcome level in particular, and the monitoring and reporting of progress towards achievement of the expected results.

Background information

Overall, the MAG programmes concerned have achieved or are likely to achieve the majority of the measurable targets set, where the project is still ongoing.⁵

Where targets were not obtained, it was predominantly due to changing circumstances beyond MAG's control (e.g. the outbreak of the new conflict in Lebanon) or unrealistic target setting (e.g., 100% of all land release beneficiaries expected to feel safer, not considering that some may already have felt safe before the intervention).

It is proven that land is used within six months of being released in most cases, and sometimes, even before land has officially been handed over (e.g., in Syria and Zimbabwe). Beneficiaries have generally increased their awareness and knowledge related to the threat of explosive ordnance (EO) and reported feeling safer following EORE and clearance activities. But there are also some exceptions, where risk education appears to have undermined the communities' resilience (Guinea-Bissau),⁶ underachieved the expectation in terms of awareness and knowledge gain of beneficiaries (Mauritania), and where the land use following clearance was less than expected (Lao PDR). Nevertheless, **MAG's EORE and LR activities under Norway's fund have clearly been relevant and effective.**

I am so proud [to be a deminer] because we do clearance and within months, we see people work the land and grow crops."

– MAG deminer in the Sri Lanka programme

MAG has reduced the risk of the EO threat for vulnerable communities, contributed to a better understanding of the extent of the remaining contamination, and increased the square metres of safe land released. With this, the activities implemented by MAG, under the Norwegian funding have, where relevant, **also contributed to State Parties' progress towards fulfilment of their obligations related to the APMBC and the CCM.** To ensure such progress, the

Central Sahel and West Africa programme, in addition to implementing field activities, also focused heavily on capacity development for national mine action authorities (NMAAs), with visible success.⁷ A successful example is Burkina Faso, where MAG worked towards the government's acknowledgement of the existence of improvised mines on its territories, and the subsequent submission of an APMBC Article 5 deadline extension request acknowledging the obligation to address this contamination (see chapter "national ownership and sustainability" for more information).⁸

Equally, several programmes increased local ownership through the training of national implementing partners or community focal points (CFPs) and teachers. While the training of local partners was an overall success and outputs were achieved or overachieved (except Sri Lanka, see chapter "national ownership and sustainability"), the delivery of expected results related to the work with NMAAs was more challenging. Successful cooperation with NMAAs proved to be time-consuming and often negatively affected by factors beyond MAGs control, such as (NMAA) internal quarrels, lack of budget allocation from the government, etc.⁹ Despite these challenges, **MAG succeeded in fulfilling the vast majority of the capacity development targets,** demonstrating both patience and persistence towards achieving expected results.

Where assessed, **MAG programmes were lauded by national stakeholders for their flexibility and adaptability.** Not only is this proof for good relationships (see also chapter "coordination and collaboration"), it also demonstrates that MAG pro-actively seeks to ensure relevance of its activities even during project cycles with pre-defined targets. This would not have been possible without the flexibility of the Norwegian fund, which is greatly appreciated by the different country programmes and national stakeholders. A good example is Lebanon, where activities have shifted towards emergency responses. While this negatively affected the outputs related to the clearance of legacy contamination, the flexibility to change



operational priorities helped to limit casualties caused by new contamination.¹⁰

The rapid response of operators incl. MAG and LMAC itself in terms of providing EORE that has been tailored for the new situation has helped greatly to avoid more accidents."
– Lebanon Mine Action Center (LMAC)

While flexibility and responsiveness has led to justified changes in priorities as illustrated above, outcome, output and target setting has not consistently been aligned with the reality of what is achievable, leading to realignments or underachievements. This does not represent a deficiency during programme implementation, but insufficient consideration of important factors, or incorrect assumptions made during the project design phase. For example, in the West Africa programme, the overall budget allocated to implement planned activities in three countries (Guinea-Bissau, Mauritania, and Senegal) was based on assumptions to raise additional funding, which however, did not materialise, and led to the early closure of the programme in Guinea-Bissau. In the Sri Lanka programme, as another example,

the appetite of the local partner to engage in capacity development activities was overestimated.

For me personally, it [learning and using soft skills] was super helpful to deal with everything else that I have in my personal life or in my other life outside of MAG, so it has been really amazing."
– Female MAG employee in the Iraq programme

It is also notable that some realignments applied are simply reductions in expected outputs, which then, in some cases, align directly with the results achieved. It could be argued that in the interest of transparency, initial targets should be retained, and the underachievement should be explained and mitigated, rather than revising the target. Finally, while data collection is in line with expected results on an output level throughout all programmes, there is a need for improvement to collect and analyse data providing evidence of improved livelihoods following clearance and safer behaviour following EORE. Data collection, processing and presentation differs significantly across the different programmes and impedes

Unintended negative outcome following MAG's work: Environmentally damaging cassava production on cleared land in Lao PDR.

Picture:
Patarapong Saraboon/
Shutterstock



MAG meets the mayors of Baaloul village, Bekaa governorate, Lebanon. While over 50% of the population in Baaloul rely on agriculture, and on contaminated land being cleared, many factors are hindering economic development including insecurity, inflation, climate change and an ever-growing diaspora due to a lack of prospects in Lebanon

mine action strategy and ToC towards better inclusion of persons with disabilities in terms of the collection of appropriately disaggregated data and more inclusive delivery of EORE on a national level.

Case studies are available that give clear evidence of the change achieved through clearance, but additional primary data was gathered to support data triangulation. This data suggests that one third of the surveyed beneficiaries¹⁵ do not use the land, mostly because they have better alternatives. However, all beneficiaries using the land mentioned **multiple reasons how clearance made a difference in their life.** It increased beneficiaries’ mental wellbeing (by allowing them to return to normality and making them feel safer), freedom of movement and to a lesser extent, facilitated access to infrastructure and services (see *Chart 3, previous page*). Only a few thought that clearance improved their livelihood by generating an income. However, this finding should be read in the light of the difficult economic situation in Lebanon, in which many negative factors affect people’s prospect of making a living.

Furthermore, the new conflict has undoubtedly changed people’s priorities away from the wish to improve their

livelihoods towards basic needs such as the safe return home and to normality, and access to crucial infrastructure.

MAG has also surpassed the identified targets for national capacity development involving the Lebanon Mine Action Centre (LMAC) with a strong focus on gender and diversity mainstreaming. In addition, MAG also provided significant technical assistance in establishing or reviewing national standards and guidelines, in the light of new challenges faced including with clearance of kicked-out ammunition and rubble removal (see Lebanon section in chapter “National ownership and Sustainability).

Overall, the activities implemented by MAG in Lebanon under the Norwegian funding are highly relevant and effective and implemented by a passionate, predominantly national team that goes beyond expectations, particularly in the current time of crisis. The main area of improvement to increase effectiveness concerns data collection and analysis related to factors relevant for measuring improved livelihood. In conjunction with this, MAG could maximise its impact through more collaboration with development actors who can assist in enhancing positive change following the clearance of land.

Sri Lanka

Under the Norwegian funding, the MAG Sri Lanka programme has or is likely to achieve or overachieve all targets related to the clearance of contaminated land by the end of the project. However, the targets set for land release through technical survey (TS), but more importantly, the staff skill acquisition and livelihood transition activities implemented for the benefit of the Skavita Humanitarian Assistance and Relief Project (SHARP), a national MA operator, will not be achieved. Less than 25% of the number of staff expected to attend the activities ultimately enrolled and completed the offered training. Both an overestimation of what can be achieved and apparently, a lack of interest in these activities by SHARP have led to the underachievement. Further information about SHARP related activities is provided in the Sri Lanka section of the “national ownership and sustainability” chapter.

However, **MAG’s clearance activities under the Norwegian funding have been, and are, a success.** MAG’s presence in Sri Lanka dates back more than two decades, and as such, its advanced clearance methodology constitutes a significant strength, ensuring effectiveness and efficiency of clearance activities (see Sri Lanka section in chapter “efficiency”). Highly skilled and capable individuals with many years of experience in the Sri Lanka programme have created an environment in which understanding the unique conditions and continuous adaptation to them has become natural to an extent difficult to grasp for outsiders at first, but very well and transparently explained by MAG’s personnel when requested.

Including activities conducted with the funding of the Norway government for MAG, clearance has reduced the remaining contamination in Sri Lanka to less than 10% of its estimated extent in 2010.¹⁶ However, after decades of work, it was necessary to conduct a completion survey to update outdated information. The survey has led to new discoveries of contaminated areas, which **may require Sri Lanka to submit an APMBC Article 5 deadline extension request beyond 2028.**¹⁷ With decreased

reluctance on the level of the NMAA to implement the LR process as per IMAS, there is the expectation that the process should become more efficient, including MAG being able to release more land through TS and non-technical survey (NTS) where appropriate (see also chapter “efficiency”). The likely throw-back of Sri Lanka having to submit its first extension request should not diminish the **significant progress made by MAG and other operators towards APMBC clearance obligations so far, and the fact is, that the risk of harm for the affected population has been reduced markedly over the years.**¹⁸

Before clearance, we did not use much of the land because we knew there could be items hidden. During clearance, we saw MAG working systematically and they were very respectful of our needs. We feel safe working the land now.”

– Clearance beneficiary in Mullaitivu District, Northern Provinces, Sri Lanka

The prioritisation of clearance in Sri Lanka as applied by MAG, in compliance with the NMAS, is well regarded and appreciated by beneficiaries. They trust the work done by MAG and have an **increased feeling of safety using cleared land.** In most cases, clearance leads to improved livelihoods rather than facilitating access to basic services, which have been established elsewhere to avoid contaminated areas. The MAG Sri Lanka programme has provided **many examples of improved livelihood** in the form of case studies, and some quantitative data, and the evaluation team observed improved livelihood through KIs and FGDs with beneficiaries during the country visit. As in the Lebanon programme, the data collection, analysis and subsequent reporting of relevant information to feed identified outcomes, is an area of improvement MAG is encouraged to address.

As it is an important component of the ToC, the evaluation team also assessed **whether the Norwegian funded intervention facilitated the return of displaced population in Sri Lanka.** The answer to this has to be “No”. This, however, is not linked in any way with the scope or quality



Mr Senavinatne's (property / landowner in Mullaitivu District, Sri Lanka) income has increased significantly since MAG conducted the clearance. He reported to now being able to grow coconuts and employ workers to cultivate his land and reported that the land would not have been used if it hadn't have been cleared

of MAG's work. Statistics of the International Organisation for Migration (IOM) show that most of the people had already returned to their place of origin between 2009 and 2011, and onwards, returns decreased continuously with fewer than 4800 internally displaced people remaining in 2024, down from 400,000 at the end of 2009. Barriers to return do not include remaining EO contamination. The primary factor is Sri Lanka's unfavourable economic climate, the relative lack of development in the North of the country, and the active and established diaspora in wealthier countries, where many people displaced in the conflict have chosen to remain. Fear over repression for some members of the diaspora who may have been involved in publicly supporting the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) against the government, may also be a factor.¹⁹

Overall, the activities implemented by MAG in Sri Lanka under the Norwegian funding are relevant and effective. The main area for improvement in Sri Lanka is quantity. The work is being done in the correct areas, and the beneficiaries are seeing benefits to their

livelihoods, however the targets for clearance itself could have been more ambitious, given that they have been achieved, despite disruption, by halfway through the final year of the grant. Representing a dual failure of project objective setting, the target for reduction was significantly too high (given difficulties in having this approved by the NMAA) and also, not wise to predict as depending on the nature of task allocated to the organisation.

Senegal and the West Africa programme

While Senegal was identified as one of the three case study countries for the evaluation, it is also part of the regional West Africa programme, which in addition, includes Guinea-Bissau and Mauritania. **The Norwegian funding was allocated to the programme with the outcomes and outputs identified at the regional level, applying to all three countries. This caused significant challenges, as Guinea-Bissau, Mauritania and Senegal have a very different context, and work modalities differ significantly.** Furthermore, the limited allocated budget (including funding from the government of

the Netherlands for Guinea-Bissau), and a lack of success in raising additional funds as anticipated due to limited donor interest in the region, made it difficult to implement the identified targets in three countries. This led to the decision to end the most expensive activities (including clearance operations) in Guinea-Bissau as of the end of 2024 and instead, focus on completing the fulfilment of agreed targets in the two other countries.

Despite – or thanks to – the timely and considerate closure of the Guinea-Bissau operations, the West Africa programme achieved most of the measurable targets identified. However, a challenge for monitoring and evaluation was that **a) the relevant logframe including identified objectives had changed during the project implementation phase (in order to align it to the MAG ToC), and b) many of the outcomes and outputs identified did not have measurable targets.** While b) made sense for some objectives (e.g., for hazardous areas identified through NTS), clear targets for other outcomes and outputs could certainly have been identified following liaison with the relevant NMAAs (e.g., number of quality management visits from NMAA, or percentage and total expenditure of local/ national government budget allocated to MA for both of which no measurable target was identified).²⁰

Overall, the project design for the West Africa programme lacked a thorough analysis of the particular needs and modalities under which activities can be implemented in the three countries with the given budget. This led to a **challenging project implementation phase, leaving the team responsible with the task of trying to achieve the identified targets, while having to bear the consequences of difficult decisions to be made** (closure of the project in Guinea-Bissau, leading to the frustration of the relevant NMAA).

The credit for the achievements of most of the expected results has to go to the programme team responsible for the implementation, which ensured identified outcomes and outputs were achieved despite the difficult starting position. The



I have products in my garden I could sell on the market. But I would have to walk a long way to detour the contaminated area. So, I am not going."

– Beneficiary in Kiandiadiu village, Casamance, Senegal

underachievement is mainly due to the expected number of EOD responses in Guinea-Bissau, which was not achieved because of the early closure of the operations. The second important factor hindering full achievement of measurable results is the low knowledge score following EORE activities in Mauritania throughout the project period. The programme's explanation that this is related to EORE beneficiaries being new to the subject matter is not entirely satisfactory. Beneficiaries in Guinea-Bissau were similarly new to the subject but seem to have assimilated the knowledge much better and subsequently, scoring highly.²¹ The evaluation team encourages MAG to have a closer look into these results and draw the necessary lessons learned to improve the effectiveness of EORE activities in Mauritania.

Objective setting (and budget allocation) for field operations in the West Africa programme, also raises some questions to what extent MAG contributed to “get the job done”. MAG’s conduct of CBAs and NTS in Senegal to get a more comprehensive overview of the remaining contamination in the Casamance region is important and needed. However, within the project period, it was not possible to finish this work. Some communities will remain un-surveyed, and also, very limited clearance capacity is in place to follow-up the already identified hazardous areas, demonstrating a need for further action.

In Mauritania, the NMAA reports that they predominantly require financial means to complete clearance in accordance with their obligations under the international conventions, while they believe they have sufficient technical expertise. Guinea-Bissau suffers from a high level of contamination with explosive remnants of war (ERW), and to a lesser extent from the presence of anti-personnel mines, yet there is very limited technical capacity on the ground to address the contamination, including MAG, who stopped its clearance activities.²² While MAG’s operations focused on community engagement to gain a better understanding of the contamination problem, to raise awareness of at-risk groups, and to build up NMAAs understanding of LR processes and IM capacities were, and are important, there is a need for follow-up activities beyond the current project – be it to “finish the job” in terms of survey, or to ultimately clear identified hazardous areas.²³ **It is therefore a recommendation for MAG and the donor**

to consider continuation of activities of the West Africa programme, and to include a component supporting clearance efforts.

Visible change was achieved through MAG’s capacity development activities. In all three countries, the activities – including support in improving LR and information management (IM) processes and in fulfilling reporting requirements related to the APMBC and CCM – were well received. Specifically, the support in fulfilling the treaty obligations showed very good results, with notable improvement of Guinea-Bissau’s and Mauritania’s reporting and presentation of progress during Meetings of States Parties (MSP). However, the success of the capacity building activities in Senegal and Guinea-Bissau, was partly affected by factors beyond MAG’s control. While the NMAA in the latter lacks support from the national government to implement an effective information management system (IMS) based on the capacity building carried out by MAG, the implementation of the agreed changes to the LR process in Senegal is hampered by NMAA internal quarrels.²⁴

Overall, the activities implemented by MAG in West Africa under the Norwegian funding are relevant and effective, and the programme has achieved a great deal, particularly when considering that MAG was not present with an MA programme in these countries before. The main criticism concerns the project design phase where a better consideration of what is most needed on a field level, and what can realistically be achieved with the given budget would have helped to increase the relevance and

Line Item	Amount (USD)
Vehicles	280,000
Detectors	200,000
Personal Protection Equipment & Uniforms	80,000
Camping Equipment and other Field Equipment	90,000
Total Equipment Costs	650,000
Operational Staff Costs	900,000
Operational Running Costs	600,000
Overhead Costs	300,000
Total Running Costs per Year	1,800,000

Simple but effective example of improved national capacity: Level of detail of the budget provided in Mauritania’s APMBC clearance deadline extension request submitted in 2021 (table on the left) versus the detail provided in the CCM extension submitted in March 2025 (table on the right)

Line Item	2026	2027	2028	Amount(USD)
Human Resources	200,000	380,000	380,000	960,000
PNDHD salaries, per diem (including engineers)	200,000	380,000	380,000	960,000
Operations	875,000	265,000	265,000	1,405,000
Vehicles	380,000	30,000	30,000	440,000
Detectors and Clearance material	25,000	5,000	5,000	35,000
Personal Protection Equipment, Uniforms	30,000	5,000	5,000	40,000
Camping other field equipment	200,000	15,000	15,000	230,000
Marking	100,000	100,000	100,000	300,000
Risk Education	140,000	110,000	110,000	360,000
Support and admin costs	260,000	165,000	165,000	590,000
Operational running costs	160,000	120,000	120,000	400,000
Overhead Costs	100,000	45,000	45,000	190,000
Total Project Costs	1,335,000	810,000	810,000	2,955,000
Mauritania Governmental Contribution	180,000	180,000	180,000	540,000
Total Resources to mobilize from the International community	1,155,000	630,000	630,000	2,415,000



effectiveness of the implemented activities. However, a very positive point to be highlighted is the peace & conflict analysis conducted in Senegal prior to planning and implementing any activities – an activity that led to positive outcomes beyond what was expected (see also chapter “cross-cutting principles with a focus on gender”) and a practice suitable to be recommended to MAG as standard procedure before establishing new country programmes.

Summary of findings for other programmes
In Cambodia, MAG’s work in Ratanakiri province under the Norwegian funding is of undoubtable relevance. With 49.6km2 of contaminated land, Ratanakiri is, as of the end of 2024, among the five provinces most heavily affected by cluster munition remnants (CMR). However, the clearance of CMR contamination is not the Cambodian government’s highest priority – the focus lies on fulfilling the clearance obligations under the APMBC (as Cambodia is not a State Party of the CCM).²⁵ **Similarly, the work conducted**

in Khammouane province in Lao PDR under the Norwegian funding is of significant relevance. A significant proportion of the funding for Lao PDR is coming from the United States (US), but this is not the case for Khammouane province, where MAG predominantly operates under funding of the Norwegian government and the FCDO.

While Cambodia achieved or overachieved all identified outcomes and outputs, Lao PDR’s performance in terms of LR, and particularly in terms of land use following clearance within six months, remained behind the expected targets, leading to an overall underachievement of the identified measurable targets of 29%. Reasons for the underachievement are mostly related to clearance of “development tasks”. While still broadly humanitarian and in alignment with the “National Strategic Plan for the Unexploded Ordnance”, relevance and effectiveness of these tasks is hampered in two ways: the areas to be cleared are not always acknowledged as confirmed hazardous areas (CHAs), and planned follow-

MAG’s clearance with Norway funding allowed a local community to open an ecotourism site at the Yak Loam Lake in Ratanakiri province, Cambodia

up development activities are delayed due to factors beyond MAG's control (e.g., government budget constraints or change of priorities, hence the low percentage of land in use after six months).²⁶ Both country programmes were able to provide qualitative data related to the impact of their activities under the Norwegian funding, but acknowledged that there is a lack of systematically collected quantitative data to provide evidence of improved livelihoods. Cambodia and Lao PDR both emphasised that they would benefit from in-country or headquarter support to improve their monitoring and evaluation capabilities.

Similar to West Africa, **the Central Sahel programme was working towards identical outcomes and outputs in three countries, but encountering very different circumstances in Burkina Faso, Mali, and Niger.** While the implementation of any activities in Mali and Niger was particularly difficult in terms of the administrative and procedural requirements implied by the government, the implementation of activities in Burkina Faso was easier. The programme succeeded in achieving most of the measurable targets, whereby the shortcomings were marginal, with a minor underachievement of the number of EORE sessions implemented and related beneficiaries reached.

Furthermore, the number of FGDs conducted to inform context analysis, and the number of training sessions provided to humanitarian actors were slightly fewer than expected. However, these shortcomings were lucidly explained with access and security challenges, reluctance of some communities to participate in activities, dependence on the availability of humanitarian actors, and delayed or missing approvals from the NMAAs to conduct activities. Regardless of quantitative achievements, the delivery of awareness training to humanitarian actors and the identification and delivery of training to CFPs was particularly relevant and effective and provoked very positive feedback (see chapter "coordination and collaboration" and "national ownership and sustainability"). Also, MAG's willingness to

implement risk education in difficult to reach areas was specifically appreciated. Not directly related to the funding of Norway, but nevertheless worthwhile mentioning is that MAG, in Burkina Faso, currently runs a "golden hour" pilot with the University of Washington, combining EORE with first aid training in remote communities with the aim to improve potential victims' (from EO or other accidents) chances of survival and recovery – a project MAG plans to expand as first results are encouraging.²⁷

I really would like to emphasise that we appreciate that MAG implements risk education in regions where not many activities have been implemented before."

– Representative of the Burkina Faso NMAA

The implemented capacity development activities towards the fulfilment of the countries' obligations under the APMBC are also a success to be highlighted in particular. With support from MAG, Burkina Faso and Mali have both acknowledged the presence of improvised mines on their territory, with Burkina Faso subsequently submitting a clearance deadline extension request to respond to the contamination.²⁸

For **Iraq**, the years 2024 and 2025 were difficult. The necessary dismissal of over 280 staff (close to a third of its previous capacity) due to the massive US funding cuts caused major internal stress, and externally, affected MAG's reputation with the authorities in KRI negatively (see also chapter "coordination and collaboration"). In these difficult times, the Norwegian funding – long-term and flexible – was reported being "the rock in the surf", giving stability, and helping to absorb the shock and continue activities for the benefit of the communities in need.

The programme, under these difficult circumstances, still managed to obtain most of the expected results, but will not fully achieve its target for LR, and consequently, for the number of direct beneficiaries of released land for various reasons mostly beyond MAG's control (see chapter "efficiency"). On a very positive note,



Mr Hazim Ghadban inside his land in Tal Aswad Kabeer village, Iraq, which he started to cultivate following MAG's clearance under the Norwegian funding

MAG overachieved the expected 80% for land being in use post-clearance: **all land revisited after six to nine months was in use by beneficiaries. During this evaluation, the Iraq programme also proved to be the most capable in providing a comprehensive and complete data set to measure improved livelihoods and access to basic services.** Although the data gathered so far shows a slight underachievement of beneficiaries reporting improved livelihoods, the Iraq programme has clearly taken onboard recommendations given during previous project evaluations (see chapter "coordination and collaboration").²⁹

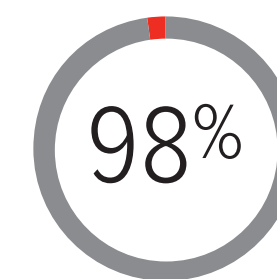


Chart 4: 98% of the surveyed beneficiaries in Iraq reported they feel confident to adopt safer behaviours following benefitting from EORE

Worthwhile mentioning is as well that the main reason to return for IDPs and refugees is that they miss their home or have to deal with difficult host conditions, while improved security and safety (e.g., through cleared EO contamination) and the motivation to regain livelihoods or property has not the highest priority. This makes it somewhat difficult for

MAG (and any other MA operator) to work towards outcomes that expect them to facilitate returns.³⁰

Overall, MAG's clearance work under the funding of the Norwegian government has undoubtedly contributed to the achievement of Iraq's clearance obligations under the APMBC in particular.³¹ This not only by effectively reducing the remaining contamination but also by allowing some realistic calculations of what work remains to be done in the governorates in which the Norwegian funded teams worked in particular (Dohuk, Kirkuk, Ninewa and Sulaymaniya).³² **The EORE**

activities implemented by MAG Iraq have been equally effective: beneficiaries showed a significantly increased level of knowledge and awareness following benefitting from EORE, with 98% of the surveyed beneficiaries reporting they feel confident to adopt safer behaviours following risk education.

Myanmar is heavily contaminated with EO including mines and cluster munitions, causing over 1,000 casualties in 2023 – the highest casualty number in any contaminated country worldwide.³³ In addition, the ongoing conflict and repression (leading to 3.5 million IDPs and 1.3 million refugees as of the end of 2024), and the consequences from environmental threats such as from earthquakes have pushed almost half of Myanmar’s population below the poverty line.³⁴

Myanmar is a country in crisis in which the implementation of any humanitarian work including MA has become extremely challenging but is of the utmost relevance – having “boots on the ground” and implementing activities based upon what is feasible is more important than an overfocus on what would be ideal. However, MAG has managed to do both exceptionally well: Remaining on the ground despite challenges and addressing the most urgent needs in Chin state which is underserved by MA operators, while also fulfilling 100% of the targets identified under the Norwegian funding.

“MAG are fantastic. [They are] creative, innovative and quick with work, responsive and bring ideas.”
– **Coordinator of the Myanmar MA Area of Responsibility**

MAG’s activities were effective beyond anticipated results: while EORE led to higher awareness and knowledge scores than expected (95% instead of 80%), MAG also integrated conflict preparedness and protection (CPP) training into its EORE activities, provided risk education to earthquake and other first responders, and – where communities remained inaccessible – ensured liaison and the conduct of CBA continued through mobile phones.

It is interesting to see that – under similarly difficult circumstances – the MAG **Syria** programme also managed to achieve 100% of the expected results. **The finding may suggest that a challenging environment boosts innovation and commitment in MAG**

programmes to deliver results “against all odds” or, on the other hand, if looked at it from a more critical standpoint, the target-setting in both countries could probably have been more ambitious. **The relevance and effectiveness of LR activities in Syria is evident and immediate**, with people starting to use parts of cleared land predominantly for agricultural purposes, while MAG is still working on the tasks.

Negotiating priorities based on people’s willingness (or unwillingness) to wait for clearance, and to balance clearance requests from humanitarian actors to facilitate their movement and access is one of the major challenges of MAG in its work under the Norwegian funding in Northeast Syria (NES). While 99% of the LR beneficiaries reported an increased feeling of safety following clearance activities, MAG also achieved the aim (an 80% score) in terms of increased knowledge and awareness following EORE activities.

To ensure its EORE activities remain as effective as possible, MAG has set a new focus by targeting IDPs and returnees whose movements have gained magnitude following the fall of the Assad regime. MAG has printed EORE messages on bread packaging used in bakeries daily frequented by IDPs, and also plans to utilise bus drivers who bring returnees back from border regions as messengers, and to implement digital EORE (not covered through the Norwegian funding).



Simple but effective: In Syria, MAG printed EORE messages on bread packaging of bakeries frequented by IDPs



MAG at work in Zimbabwe

MAG’s work in Zimbabwe is relevant and appropriately targeted. The remaining contaminated areas in Mudzi district, where MAG is working under the Norwegian funding, are located close to communities, and cleared land is used immediately. While it has been reported that the inability to farm land led to malnutrition among vulnerable groups in particular, the land is very fertile and offers long-term food security and economic prospects not only for the local people but the district more broadly, and the communities in the Cahora Bassa district on Mozambique’s side of the border.³⁵

Zimbabwe shows a solid performance under the Norwegian funding. Targets that will not be achieved by the end of the project are related to insufficiently considered goal setting. Due to the nature of the minefields MAG is currently working in, less land was cleared but more land reduced than planned.³⁶ These means that overall land release targets, and targets for the reduction of land are achieved, but not the target for clearance. For future projects, not only for Zimbabwe, it is recommended to only include a target for overall land release, but not for the land release methodologies to be used to achieve the overall target. What methodology is used will (and has to) depend on the particular nature of the contamination, and types of tasks allocated to MAG, which is both difficult to accurately forecast.

Also, it was expected that 100% of beneficiaries surveyed after land release will report increased feelings of safety. This target does not consider that some beneficiaries – based on their individual risk perception – may already have felt safe before land release took place. Consequently, “only” 95% reported feeling safer, with which the set 100% target could not be achieved. In conjunction with the target setting and follow-up monitoring, the Zimbabwe programme emphasised the importance of having the necessary in-programme monitoring, evaluation, accountability and learning (MEAL) capacity, which is currently not existent.

While the Norwegian funding did not include a community liaison/EORE component in Zimbabwe, MAG was able to utilise relevant capacities funded under other grants, and additionally, benefitted from exclusively locally recruited deminers supporting MAG’s outreach in the concerned communities. The decision to focus funding on clearance teams has been, and is reasonable, particularly in the light of Zimbabwe’s APMBC clearance deadline extension request submitted in April 2025.³⁷ **Ultimately, the job – in MAG’s area of operations now predominantly consisting of challenging minefields difficult and time-consuming to clear – has (and can) be done but requires exactly what Norway has committed to in the current project: to fund clearance capacity.**

4. Findings: Coordination and collaboration

Coordination and collaboration in support of the coherence and integration of mine action (MA) activities in other initiatives, as well as in support of the maximisation of expected results, is – or should be – an important cornerstone of every MA project. Consequently, it is part of MAG's ToC, and a component included in the evaluation of the Norwegian funded project. MAG demonstrates that it works consistently well with other MA operators and with national authorities. However, throughout the assessed programmes, there is potential to intensify and institutionalise partnerships with other humanitarian and development actors – a recommendation MAG may also want to consider globally, in terms of its strategic focus for future projects.



Global findings

MAG's collaboration with other MA operators is consistently excellent with both national and international organisations. In some cases, MAG is actively collaborating with these organisations to share resources or trial new techniques (e.g., testing of mechanical assets in Sri Lanka in cooperation with the US-based Humanitarian Demining Research and Development Program, HD R&D). On other occasions, programmes are coordinating to avoid overlaps of areas of responsibility or potential frictions during the planning and implementation of tasks (e.g., in Zimbabwe, under the MA Consortium, MAG and the HALO Trust cooperate to complete clearance work in Mudzi district).

In support of NMAAs, MAG has taken an active role in Technical Working Groups (TWG), where information and best practice is shared. In some national programmes, MAG took over an MA sector coordination role

(e.g., in Burkina Faso following the departure of United Nations Mine Action Service UNMAS in summer 2024). Furthermore, MAG regularly advocates for, and helps implement, improved national policies and guidelines, for example on gender and debris management/rubble removal in Lebanon and on LR and IM processes in Senegal.

Throughout the programmes concerned, MAG has established close relationships with local authorities from province to district, to community level – including with traditional and religious leaders. While this is a necessity to gain the trust allowing MAG to work in affected areas, it has also been proven to increase the effectiveness and efficiency of MAG's work in many cases (e.g., in Iraq where local authorities, through their influence on the central government, helped with speeding up tasking processes). Some of the NMAAs thought that MAG could improve cooperation and communication – **particularly in countries where MAG's main programme offices were not set up in the**

In December 2022, together with the Senegalese NMAA, MAG organised a workshop with national stakeholders and international guests to update the country's land release processes. A good example of a capacity building activity under the Norwegian funded project which, at the same time, contributes to increased coordination and collaboration

same location as the NMAAs. However, on the other hand, some NMAAs also thought that MAG's offices should be closer to their areas of operation. In most cases – while certainly depending on personal preferences of the interviewed individuals – **the NMAAs seem to perceive the coordination and collaboration between them and MAG as MAG's responsibility, which is to be managed and attended by high level management staff, most preferably through regular personal contact.**

Another finding that applies to several countries, is that **where MAG has implemented Weapons and Ammunitions Management (WAM) activities, these have opened the door and eased engagement with the NMAA when intended to start a MA programme,** specifically where the authority is part of the Ministry of Defence (MoD) or otherwise related to the Security Forces that benefitted from the WAM activities.

“Clearance should not be an end in itself, but a means to an end. There should be a linkage between clearance and use of land from which mines have been cleared.”

– Representative of the Mudzi Rural District Council in Zimbabwe

MAG has also proven to be open to collaboration with other actors in the humanitarian, development and peacebuilding sphere, particularly when such is directly linked with the provision of MA activities. Examples of this include providing EORE or information relating to contamination to such actors, sharing EORE material for distribution through these actors, supporting them in gaining access and implementing projects by providing risk assessment and clearance, or collaborating with them in terms of rubble removal and recycling when working in built-up areas.³⁸

However, collaboration between MAG and non-MA actors with the aim of improving livelihoods (e.g., through supporting reconstruction, provision of

crucial infrastructure, tools, or services; or sustainable land use following clearance), **beyond contributing with MA activities, are much rarer and far from being institutionalised.** There are differing opinions within the concerned MAG programmes to what extent such collaboration can or should be in their purview.³⁹ **But the fact is that stakeholders anticipate MA to be more interdisciplinary and holistic. Ultimately, if and how to respond to this expectation must be considered on MAG's global strategic level and has to include donors to clarify what the scale and scope of outcomes such as “improved livelihoods” should be** – a discussion MAG has already commenced with other donors.

“Of course clearance is needed. But it would be good if MAG could also advocate for us to get tools to work more efficiently on the cleared land.”
– A beneficiary in Kiandiadiu village, Casamance, Senegal

In conjunction with the previous statements, and as final note of the global findings, **the relatively small role of UN agencies in cooperating with the MA sector and with MAG specifically in the concerned programmes, is surprising.** While there are exceptions, notably UNMAS and the well-established collaboration with the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) in Lebanon and Myanmar, there was often minor engagement between MAG with other UN agencies (and the other way around), even though many of the sustainable development goals that MAG does not facilitate directly, would be well within the purview of the UN agencies. For example, in several countries, sustainable farming practices would have enhanced livelihoods and improved environmental sustainability, but this was left only to government agencies with minimal funding.

“MA should be more integrated and interdisciplinary. You cannot clap with one hand. You need to address people's needs holistically and comprehensively.”
– Representative of a humanitarian actor in Syria

Findings per case study programme

Lebanon

MAG maintains a close relationship with the NMAA, and – through its WAM programme – with other elements of the armed forces; working both effectively and with due consideration for humanitarian principles and neutrality. MAG was also instrumental in the development of appropriate policies and procedures for the emergency response, particularly that of the rubble removal activities and rapid response EOD tasks.

MAG also assists the work of the regional training school in Beirut with equipment, staff, and technical experts. Beyond the established national coordination mechanism, the programme maintains regular informal contact with UNMAS and direct coordination with the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) for community liaison and EORE activities in UNIFIL's area of operations. **The close collaboration with UNICEF to develop and implement child-focussed EORE materials, and the collaboration with NGOs specialised in the inclusion of persons with disabilities are two examples how MAG Lebanon cooperates with partners beyond the MA sector to maximise the reach and scope of its EORE activities.**

“MAG is very responsive and the best partner we have worked with during the conflict.”

– Representative of a humanitarian actor in Lebanon

MAG was also one of the key organisations coordinating the emergency response following the outbreak of the recent conflict and working with various organisations to provide assistance and resources to IDPs, particularly those in shelters. Both during the conflict and more generally, NGOs rely on MAG's assistance to understand the EO threat and apply safe behaviour. In return, MAG is responsive and active in assisting them where possible, with information, resources, and integrating MA activities in the other actors' responses.

The Lebanon programme should continue collaboration in this vein and could potentially leverage the experience of UNICEF for training of MAG staff on the subject of child abuse and exploitation so that victims could potentially be recognised and, where appropriate, referred on. Furthermore, **MAG Lebanon should revisit its pre-conflict intention to seek collaboration with actors such as the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) to expand its contribution in creating sustainable and improved livelihood for beneficiaries** including the reestablishment, sustainment, and provision of basic services, whether in relation to the conflict, the economic crisis, or amid climate change.

Sri Lanka

MAG Sri Lanka is consistently working to improve coordination with other MA operators. The majority of these operators are currently working in the north of the country, thus a lot of effort in recent months has gone into distributing work areas more appropriately between the two international operators (MAG and the HALO Trust). By allocating tasks between them that are closer to their respective bases, both organisations enhanced their efficiency through reduced travel times in favour of longer working hours. **The national and regional MA authorities find it easy to work with MAG,** appreciate their assistance on technical matters, approve of MAG's principles and working practices, and applaud their commitment to safe work in particular.

MAG Sri Lanka has limited involvement with actors from other sectors. However, for Sri Lanka's environmental resilience, it would be very valuable to seek collaboration aiming to promote the use of sustainable agricultural practices. The development and promotion of practices that maximise crop value, such as by growing additional plant varieties that are not common in Sri Lanka, but would work in tandem with common crops, would also be beneficial. Ideally, such collaboration would be sought with the Ministry of Agriculture. However, a lack of funding and interest of the central government in the northern part of the country, suggests that an NGO, which MAG



The Maankulam Base Hospital in Sri Lanka – where clearance could only be conducted while construction was ongoing and hospital personnel were still working on site – stands for insufficient integration of MA activities in many national programmes, whereby MA operators only having very limited leverage to change such situations

Sri Lanka would still have to identify, may be a more suitable partner.

The example of Maankulam Base Hospital in Mullaitivu district provides synopsis of MAG's work in Sri Lanka. Clearance took place at various stages of construction, whilst hospital personnel were still working on site as well. Although neither of these facts is a negative indictment, it demonstrates a lack of involvement in the planning stage, which would have allowed clearance before construction commenced, facilitating a safer environment for workers and less disruption for clearance, construction and hospital staff. The clearance on the site should be a source of pride for MAG, but the **efficiency of the clearance could have been increased if there had been an effective interface with MAG beforehand, on the part of the donors and planners.**

Senegal and the West Africa programme

Coordination and collaboration was a crucial factor in initiating MAG's MA West Africa programme. The fact that MAG already maintained a well-regarded WAM programme in Guinea-Bissau and Mauritania, opened doors to establish an MA programme in both countries.

Nevertheless, becoming operational in all three countries, including Senegal, required time and effort – be it to get the necessary agreements in place, to find local partners to work with, or to establish operational bases and train the required personnel. While

this was not seen as an impediment to the fulfilment of identified project deliverables, **the required effort to coordinate and cooperate activities in three countries under very different modalities was probably underestimated in the project design phase, and required exceptional commitment from the MAG team to make it work.** The team should also be congratulated for its transparent communication related to the limitations of MAG's engagement, a behaviour that was appreciated by NMAAs, while at the same time, the NMAA of Guinea-Bissau in particular criticised the limited in-country presence of MAG decision-makers, and the limited sustainability of implemented field activities due to the short duration of the project.⁴⁰

Similarly good relationships with authorities were observed at the operational level in Casamance, in the south of Senegal. The teams were in regular contact with NMAA staff but also maintained a good relationship with the locally present army units, and provincial, district and community level leaders.

The cooperation in Mauritania worked equally well, where MAG and the NMAA implemented field activities together as combined teams, easing access to communities thanks to the NMAA's official mandate, and MAG's experience in community liaison. The relationship with the local implementing partners in Guinea-Bissau was perceived as being good, particularly with HUMAID,

the clearance operator that worked under MAG's supervision. The collaboration with NADEL for community liaison and EORE was more challenging, requiring a higher level of supervision than anticipated, to ensure the right quality standards were maintained.

Coordination in Senegal beyond the MA sector is another achievement MAG deserves credit for. Thanks to MAG's networking, and the commitment of the Swiss embassy to act as host, a "round table" among parties interested in the progress of MA in the Casamance region took place in June 2025 in Dakar. With the current positive political climate including a national development plan for Casamance being in place (including for demining), and the interest of the international community in MA in Casamance as part of further peacebuilding efforts (representatives from 12 embassies participated in the round table), there is momentum that should be used to further enhance collaboration among stakeholders with the aim to "get the job done" in Casamance.⁴¹

Summary of findings for other programmes

The MAG programme in Cambodia and Lao PDR both collaborate well with the NMAAs as part of the established national coordination mechanisms in their respective countries. More importantly, they work closely with the designated provincial and district level authorities – a cooperation

that seems to work particularly well in Cambodia, where the Mine Action Planning Unit (MAPU) in Ratanakiri, cooperates with MA and development actors to coordinate work. The MAPU, while being satisfied with the cooperation, also expressed gratitude for support received from MAG in terms of technical advice.

In Lao PDR, the cooperation at the provincial level was reported to have improved continuously over the past ten years, easing task prioritisation and day-to-day cooperation, while coordination on the national level appears to be somewhat burdensome, involving different and changing ministries and NGOs with differing agendas and priorities, requiring considerable coordination with limited output.

Both programmes interact well with other MA operators to ensure effectiveness and efficiency of their work. In Lao PDR, MAG cooperates with the HALO Trust to avoid any overlap of work areas, while in Cambodia, MAG maintains active partnerships with the HALO Trust and several other MA operators. The Cambodia programme has also started engaging with possibilities to cooperate more with development actors to increase the impact of released land and leverage environmentally sustainable land use, particularly in the light of the results of a pilot study related to this subject.⁴² **Overall, Cambodia and Lao PDR coordinate and**



MAG providing training to the local NGO "Action Solidaire e Développement" (ASD) in Burkina Faso – the local partner chosen by MAG to implement community liaison and EORE activities in the under-served Cascade region

collaborate to the extent required in an established, well organised national MA programme. On a global level, MAG has also worked closely with the Cambodian NMAA in preparation of the Fifth APMBC Review Conference held in Siem Reap in November 2024. However, both **programmes** are encouraged to explore possibilities for collaboration that helps leverage sustainable land use following clearance in particular.

Collaboration with the NMAA in Mali and Niger, which are part of MAG's Central Sahel programme, was described by MAG as being burdensome, relating to the legislative, administrative and procedural requirements MAG and NGOs are obliged to comply with, and which impede efficient project implementation. This includes for example, in Niger, the recently added requirement to be escorted for all activities. **The circumstances in Burkina Faso were more favourable, and the NMAA was particularly grateful to MAG for taking over the coordination role from UNMAS in 2024** and organising monthly coordination meetings for the MA sector.

Similar to the West Africa programme, it was emphasised that having an existing presence (and good reputation) through WAM activities in all three countries was a significant advantage to start a MA programme with national authorities. In the Central Sahel programme, **MAG has also established partnerships with local NGOs** for support in community liaison and delivery of EO, **and with humanitarian actors, by supporting them in integrating EO-related risks in their field deployment planning.** While the collaboration with the latter was a full success giving rise to further needs (such as expanding the training to an activity to be repeated regularly), the collaboration with local NGOs was only partly satisfactory (see chapter “national ownership and sustainability”).

To conclude: the Central Sahel programme has cleverly navigated its way through challenging circumstances in Mali and Niger in favour of achieving expected outputs. In Burkina Faso, by taking over

the coordination role from UNMAS and supporting the programme in working towards its APMBC obligations (see chapter “national ownership and sustainability”) **MAG placed itself in a strong position to shape future activities** that help the country to overcome its challenges.

MAG's coordination and collaboration with the two NMAAs in Iraq – the Directorate of Mine Action (DMA) in the Republic of Iraq, and the Iraqi Kurdistan Mine Action Agency (IKMAA) is well established. MAG is in regular contact with the DMA, although formal coordination meetings have ceased since UNMAS handed over the responsibility to the DMA. A shortcoming MAG took on board, based on recommendations given in a previous evaluation report, and ever since, has organised informal meetings among MA stakeholders.⁴³ A recurring criticism from the DMA towards MAG is that their decision-makers are not in Baghdad (where the DMA resides) but in Erbil, which is closer to MAG's area of operations.⁴⁴

“We would like to strengthen an already strong partnership with MAG, including greater involvement in the design stage of projects, to tailor the activities to those on the ground.”

– Representative of SHO, the local partner of MAG in the Republic of Iraq

The day-to-day coordination nevertheless works well, whereby MAG focuses on cooperating with local authorities. These have recently – through bottom-up pressure on the government – also helped to open tasks that have been reserved for clearance by commercial operators, but where the community is desperate to use the land. The cooperation with IKMAA has traditionally been straightforward and worked very well, with MAG also providing technical and logistics support. However, the relationship has suffered from the US funding shock that led to a significant reduction of MAG's capacity to engage in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq, including providing support to IKMAA. A downsizing the Kurdistan government (not necessarily IKMAA) did not approve of, and which affected the relationship negatively.



Separate to the Norwegian funding, **MAG Iraq has also started a collaboration for EO and community liaison with the national operator** Shareteah Humanitarian Organization (SHO). The partnership is a success acknowledged by both partners and there is a clear appetite to expand collaboration to future projects. An area that still offers room for improvement, is the institutionalisation of partnerships with humanitarian and development actors. While MAG engages in the relevant national coordination forum and can easily provide good examples of projects coordinated with the UNDP, the Federal Government of Iraq (GoI), and the local organisation Nadia's Initiative in support of improved livelihoods, reconstruction and durable solutions, these collaborations remain isolated and are not based on an institutionalised partnerships with agreed action plan.⁴⁵

In **Myanmar**, direct collaboration with communities and with the MA Area of

Responsibility (AoR) led by UNICEF, are the only effective coordination mechanism in place. MAG has voluntarily taken over the sub-coordination of the sector for the northwest and has taken on a lot of the AoR activities following the earthquake in March 2025, including EO awareness training for first responders.

Furthermore, MAG is very active in the MA AoR's Technical Advisory Group. Collaboration beyond the MA AoR is only taking place to a limited extent. Humanitarian activities are a “red flag” for the government, hence NGOs are generally cautious to share information and seek collaboration, aiming to avoid becoming subject to increased government attention. To implement the Norwegian-funded project, **the MAG Myanmar programme has impressively navigated its way through a very difficult context, demonstrating the right balance of caution and activism to implement activities for the benefit of the affected communities.**

MAG West Africa programme director presenting MAG's work during a “round table” held in June 2025 in Dakar, Senegal to discuss the progress and needs for MA activities in Casamance with interested stakeholders

The MAG programme in **Syria** cooperates well with the MA centre for NES (NESMAC), which highlighted MAG's Safety & Occupational Health (S&OH) protocols and practices, including for the training and re-training of its personnel (to which NESMAC staff were invited too) as the organisation's particular strength. However, frequent changes of MAG's country director in the past have made administrative collaboration difficult and time-consuming, as decisions taken previously had to be re-discussed with newly appointed country directors, indicating that **MAG internal hand-over processes were not optimal.**

“If you want to do projects in Syria, you cannot do this without MAG. MAG's work comes first, they liaise with local people, clear areas, then come other projects.”

– Representative of the Syrian NGO
ASHNA for Development

NESMAC also mentioned that it would wish for MAG to work more with national implementing partners. Whereby the political climate but also the limited number of local partners⁴⁶ was a hindering factor to explore this possibility in the past, MAG is interested to revisit the idea, particularly in the light of the government's plan to establish a national MA authority and centre, working towards a “Whole of Syria” approach. Although not under a formal agreement, MAG collaborates very well with the national NGO “ASHNA for Development”. **A win-win relationship as MAG facilitates Ashna's access to project sites, while Ashna often follows MAG's request to address communities' additional crucial needs (e.g., facilitating access to electricity and water) following clearance of contaminated land.**

The coordination between MAG, the broader MA sector, and the local authorities in Zimbabwe works without friction. The Zimbabwean national MAC reported that they are “fully satisfied” with the cooperation and communication with MAG, while MAG also maintains a good relationship with the HALO Trust, with whom they share the area of operations in Mudzi district. The cooperation works particularly well between



MAG, the Rural District Council and the local government representation, which – amongst other duties – is responsible to implement the district level development plan based on Zimbabwe's national strategy. **MAG, according to the Council, contributes significantly to the implementation of the development plan by closely cooperating land release operations with the district level office, and council representatives on the community level,** where coordination is also eased through MAG employees' origins from these communities.

As part of these efforts, MAG cooperates with the Ministry of Agriculture, which is committed to work towards climate resilience and sustainable land use, but does not have the resources to do so. To support these good intentions further, **the MAG Zimbabwe programme is encouraged to explore any possibilities for partnerships with organisations such as UNDP, the World Food Programme (WFP) or World Vision** – a plan the programme already proposed in its Norwegian Funding annual report for 2023 but did not pursue further.

5. Findings: Efficiency

The economic use of resources is not only a part of good governance but – in a time of global financial turmoil affecting the broader MA sector – a matter of survival for every organisation and programme. MAG has demonstrated impressive efficiency and resilience, managing to achieve (and overachieve) most of the expected results, despite increasingly reduced budgets, enforced by virtue of brutal funding cuts. The evaluation concludes that Norway received excellent value for money, with very little that MAG could have done more economically in the delivery of the donor's project.

Global findings

Across the assessed MAG programmes, organisational and operational efficiency is high, with programmes providing very good value for money, not only as a whole, but also at the project level. This is particularly relevant in the case of the Norwegian government funded project.

Organisational efficiency within MAG was already high before the US funding cut, which affected many of the programmes concerned. However, the ensuing financial shock demanded an in-depth assessment of how programmes can further optimise the structural setup and shared overhead costs, while maintaining the ability to deliver the expected results to other donors. **The assessment left some of the programmes realising (and transparently acknowledging) that they still had a potential to economise more, which they subsequently did;** leaving them with very lean structures and streamlined processes that would be difficult to optimise any further.

MAG's operational efficiency, in general, is equally formidable. Some of the examples demonstrating this include the use of combined EORE/CL teams, focussing on one or the other activity (or in many cases, combining them) depending on communities' and technical teams' needs; or the use of personnel that are trained as mechanical asset operators and deminers, and therefore, can work at all times in either one or the other function without idle times. Potential areas of improvement for operational efficiency gains exist.

However, they are hampered by requirements set out in national MA standards or restrictions related to other national legislations, or the context (e.g., no permission to cancel land or use drones).

In short: What MAG does or does not do, happens for an explainable reason.

Universally, as far as possible within the limitations explained, MAG utilises methods and equipment suitable to the terrain, the contamination problem, and the contextual pre-conditions prevalent in the different

countries, ensuring effectiveness while also thriving for maximum efficiency.

Areas where MAG does have potential to improve efficiency on a global level, include internal learning mechanisms, and a greater systematic analysis of the relationship between programme, investment and innovation lifecycles. While some thematic, regional, and global learning forums exist, and programmes acknowledge being aware of their existence, they do not utilise them in a systematic manner, which seem to be linked with a lack of clarity with regard to who is responsible for the organisation, lead, and moderation of these forums.

You realise you can do more than you expected, when there are fewer teams."

– Employee in the MAG Iraq programme

Lessons learned, such as from the Iraq programme, which recently went through the difficult, but in the eyes of the MAG Iraq employees well-managed, exercise of merging two operational bases, and having to reduce its staff to a third of its initial capacity, **are a missed opportunity if not shared with other programmes.** The renewing, upgrading, or increasing of mechanical fleets, or the addition of assets such as ground penetrating radar, drones, or TS dogs is a way to potentially further increase productivity in some of the programmes. However, **this requires conducting more systematic analysis on how best to balance increasing maintenance costs and decreasing productivity of aging assets, against the costs of new, more efficient and innovative technologies** which may, however, only be in use for a limited period of time in programmes scheduled to end in the near future.

In addition, it is worth considering how programme and project cycles can be better aligned with key personnel's engagement in programmes. In several cases, changes of key personnel (country directors in particular) had a negative effect on efficiency as the changes led to frictions



(e.g., in the case of the Syria programme, see chapter "coordination and collaboration"), or represented difficult starting positions for new key personnel, who had to implement projects they were not involved in in the design phase (e.g., in Sri Lanka and the West Africa programme). It is acknowledged that the mitigation of this problem is a challenge. However, an increased focus and potentially more stringent requirements for handovers between key personnel, as well as more central oversight and documentation, particularly during project design and the start of the implementation phase, could help to improve the situation.

Finally, while being an important activity in itself, contributing to enhanced human security, **existing WAM activities in countries in which MAG later established MA programmes, eased this process and increased efficiency of the setup phase, thanks to existing trust and good relationships with security forces.** This is particularly true for countries in which MA activities are coordinated by authorities linked to the MoD and/or the security forces.

While WAM is currently not in the realm of the Norwegian funding, it is an area of potential engagement the donor may want to explore, not only for the sake of the efficiency of MA activities, but also in terms of a holistic approach to increase human security in the target countries.

Findings per case study programme

Lebanon

The Lebanese economic crisis, conflict, the associated humanitarian situation, and significant funding cuts have all made the management of the Lebanon programme more difficult and stretched budgets thin.

Despite these factors, MAG Lebanon has arguably emerged with a programme that is leaner and more resilient for the future. Rather than simply aiming to survive these issues, the management opted to utilise this as an opportunity to restructure around a more efficient framework, to ensure that upon cessation of the emergency situation, MAG would be able to deliver as much cleared land, risk education, and

Mechanical assets in the MAG Lebanon programme: Crucial for the many new rubble removal tasks, but also increasing efficiency of "traditional" clearance tasks

other outputs as possible with the remaining resources.

On an operational level, the programme has benefitted from LMAC's openness to expand risk education outreach through innovative channels such as social media platforms, TV advertisements, and billboard campaigns. LMAC also encouraged collaboration between MAG and other humanitarian organisations for the distribution of emergency risk education campaigns and materials and has launched its own campaign to educate the public, with MAG supporting this process by securing funding and sharing technical expertise. **All the result of a strong relationship between MAG, LMAC and the regional MAG that continues to enhance the effectiveness and efficiency of MAG, and the whole MA programme.**

The programme emphasised the importance of mechanical assets in the Lebanon context. On certain types of terrain and tasks, mechanical assets can increase efficiency by processing ground much faster than deminers, meaning that the subsequent confirmation process is less labour intensive than full clearance. **For rubble clearance activities, the use of mechanical assets in significant quantities is a gamechanger for conducting these tasks efficiently and safely.** The programme is therefore also investigating the possibility of increasing the armouring of certain mechanical assets to allow them to clear dual purpose cluster munitions.⁴⁷

Clearance teams in Lebanon are largely cross-trained, allowing them to deploy as Multi-Task Teams (MTT), who can work in minefields, as well as on cluster munitions, battle area clearance (BAC), and rubble clearance tasks, and with some of the deminers within the teams being cross-trained as operators for mechanical assets. This ensures minimal downtime of personnel and mechanical assets and allows teams to be easily redirected to other tasks, as demonstrated by the current restriction to work along the frontline bordering Israel (the "Blue Line").

Finally, **the use of digital EORE material as well as the collaboration with several other humanitarian actors** for the delivery of EORE and/or the dissemination of EORE material, **has greatly increased the reach** of MAG's activities with minimum resources, benefitting not only communities at risk which would otherwise not have been served, but also **the donor, who gets maximum value for the funds allocated.**

Sri Lanka

The operational efficiency of the Sri Lanka programme has been affected by restrictions beyond the control of MAG.

Previously, severe limitations were placed by the NMAA on the ability of MAG and other operators to cancel and reduce land, requiring them to conduct full clearance even when this was unlikely to be necessary. However, MAG is now permitted to use these methods, which are expected to increase efficiency moving forward. This is an improvement the current technical management team is entitled to take credit for, as they have been liaising with the NMAA to achieve this.

As part of the national completion survey, MAG teams have been re-surveying much of MAG's area of operations, as requested by the NMAA.⁴⁸ **The initial reports from this process promise higher efficiency for LR in the future, with a significant number of areas previously considered contaminated by the NMAA ruled out as being uncontaminated.** While this is not directly linked to MAG's internal arrangements to ensure organisational or operational efficiency, it shows the willingness of the NMAA to comply with land release processes as per IMAS, in working towards completion of its APMBC obligations.⁴⁹

Similar to Lebanon, to increase efficiency, **Sri Lanka would likely benefit from an investment in additional mechanical assets, as the fleet is now of a significant age and the maintenance burden is increasing, particularly when considering that MAG may remain in-country for an extended period.** Multiple mechanical systems are used, including trialling new mechanical



sifting methods such as the McCloskey system, which filters ordnance from soil utilising equipment derived from agriculture. While this method was somewhat "hit or miss" in the Northern province, it has been re-deployed to areas of soft, sandy ground where it seems to be more effective.

Also worthwhile mentioning are the challenging circumstances related to the contamination and terrain MAG faces in Sri Lanka. These include the presence of undamaged, functional and intact EO due to favourable climate conditions, and extensive vegetation growth, requiring innovative ground preparation and clearance methods. **The methods in use by MAG and other operators are somewhat unpopular globally but appear to effectively and efficiently address the challenges particular to Sri Lanka:** "REDS" (Rake Excavation and Detection System), consisting of two rakes that are used to clear loose vegetation and remove the top layer of soil alongside detector sweeps, and supplemented by more conventional techniques or mechanical assets where REDS is unsuitable.

The organisational efficiency within MAG Sri Lanka, similar to the Lebanon programme, is optimised. If anything,

the programme would benefit from more personnel, particularly for IM and monitoring purposes. The Sri Lanka programme, unlike other programmes, has a designated communication officer, aiming to channel external requests and increase efficiency in responding to them – an approach that works well, although receiving answers related to collected data remained particularly difficult. This is perhaps further indication that data is not easily accessible through dashboards, and IM processes could be improved for more comprehensive and comprehensible reporting.

Senegal and the West Africa programme

The West Africa programme, with the principal programme and management staff shared to run operations in three countries, is highly efficient. However, it comes with the caveat of increased travel costs for personnel to engage with all three NMAAs in person, and furthermore, criticism was expressed by the Guinea-Bissau NMAA,

Use of the REDS system in Sri Lanka: Somewhat controversial but proving to be safe, effective and efficient, if properly trained and supervised

who would have wished MAG management personnel to be in country at all times, to ease cooperation and communication.⁵⁰ Regardless of these caveats, the limited budget of the programme made the chosen arrangement a necessity: establishing fully staffed offices in all three countries would not have been financeable, but also, would not have been fully justified to run a very limited number of field operations.

Staff reports that the project in Guinea Bissau occupied the majority of their time and that the human resources set up was not initially appropriate for the needs of the programme.”

– Extract from “Final Evaluation of MACM II MAG,” January 2025

The in-country arrangements for field teams were equally economically maximised: in Senegal, community liaison teams move exclusively with motorbikes – cars are only rented with a local company for individual days, if absolutely necessary, e.g., for visits such as the one of the evaluation team, keeping transportation and maintenance costs at the absolute minimum. Furthermore, the small field office of the community liaison teams also serves as accommodation for their manager during his in-country stays.

While this demonstrates commitment to deliver maximum value for money, it is also an indication of a budget which is, in reality, overstretched, at the expense of MAG’s employees’ right of privacy. A sensible cost saving, which at the same time, eases cooperation and enhances the team spirit, is the field office in Mauritania which MAG shares with the NMAA.

Across the board, the West Africa programme works efficiently, but there is justifiable concern that some of the current solutions would not scale to work well if the programme were to expand, and the extremely tight budget, despite the programme’s economic use, was simply not sufficient to implement all activities in all three countries with the desired sustainability (see also chapter “relevance and effectiveness”).

Summary of findings for other programmes

Mechanical assets are utilised in **Cambodia** to increase speed of vegetation cutting, ground preparation and/or clearance. Personnel are mostly trained to act as both mechanical asset operators and deminers, and with the contamination and the terrain favourable for mechanical assets, there is no downtime. The Cambodian programme also cooperates with the Cambodian Mine Action Centre (CMAC) and APOPO for the use of mine detection dogs (MDD) and rats and, in addition, conducted a study with APOPO that found that TS with dogs was somewhat more efficient than “traditional” TS.⁵¹ Travel time and costs between MAG’s two operating provinces (Battambang and Ratanakiri) – were mentioned as an aspect that affects efficiency negatively but remains unavoidable. The programme tries to reduce travel between the two provinces as much as possible, e.g., by holding online instead of in-person meetings, and by sharing cars when having to travel.

A major driver for efficiency loss was reported to be funding gaps, as such cause delays and increase costs for subsequent projects. **Such a funding gap for one BAC team could be avoided thanks to the flexible Norwegian grant. As a private donor offered to match the amount of funding MAG was awarded, Norway, in fact, received double the value for its money.**

The programme in **Lao PDR** also works with mechanical assets, but due to the difficult terrain in many areas, this is to a much smaller extent. The Lao PDR programme also follows **a different approach for vegetation cutting. Namely, it hires local people for this task, which is a win-win situation as it generates incomes for affected communities, while reassigning MAG’s own more expensive personnel to other responsibilities.** On a macro-level and in the long-term, it is hoped that the efficiency of the UXO sector in Lao PDR as whole will benefit from the LEAP project which aims to enhance efficiency and accessibility of public services in Lao PDR and is subsequently expected to make public administration more transparent, efficient, and centred around the needs of the people.⁵²



In 2024, Iraq went through a complete transformation to increase organisational efficiency. The relocation and merging of two operational bases into one, reduced infrastructure and travel costs immediately and was executed with care; based on a thorough conflict sensitivity assessment. However, these savings were not sufficient to absorb the US funding cuts, which required a radical downsizing of operational teams and the programme’s management and support services staff.

During the evaluation, MAG Iraq acknowledged that there was previous awareness of inefficiencies within the programme, and the described interventions to reduce costs should have been executed earlier. This is an indication that in mature programmes with relatively stable long-term funding and a deep-seated modus operandi, potential opportunities for efficiency gains may be missed. In Iraq, this awareness is now present, and further optimisation has already taken place, or is planned, by restructuring operational teams and trying to share costs

of mechanical assets across all donors. The latter is not the case today, despite all land release donors benefitting from the assets.⁵³

Factors beyond MAG’s control affecting the programme’s efficiency negatively include time-consuming re-registration periods for mechanical assets, during which the assets remain unavailable. This was a factor that negatively affected the Norwegian funded project and led to an underachievement of the expected land release outputs in the second year of the grant. In addition, that MA organisations are not allowed to conduct clearance where they previously conducted NTS, is a significant negative factor for efficiency. MAG tried to mitigate this problem by conducting joint NTS with the DMA. This practice initially worked but lapsed following the broader MA sector not agreeing with the practice, particularly because it came with the payment of allowances to the DMA to enable them to travel to the tasks in question.

Overall, the Iraq programme was forced to cut costs at scale, which to its credit,

MAG Cambodia uses manual demining in combination with mechanical assets and – in collaboration with its partners – animal detection systems (ADS) to speed up work to the extent possible



Syrian schoolteachers proudly presenting their certificates following the successful completion of the MAG EORE Training of Trainers (ToT) – an engagement that helped to increase the reach and efficiency of MAGs activities in NES

has survived well and with an increased awareness that the programme (as with every other MA programme) is not immune to shocks and will ultimately end. This is a mature stage in the programme's lifecycle that now requires con-sideration of the appropriate and most efficient exit strategy.

In the **Central Sahel, Myanmar, and Syria** programme, the training and use of CFPs, teachers or volunteers had a positive impact on efficiency through increased reach and the number of activities delivered within the available budget. Central Sahel also worked with local NGOs, saving time and finances to establish activities in areas where the NGOs were already present, whereby MAG would have had to build up relationships and logistical arrangements from scratch. This allowed MAG to maximise reach while working with a very lean structure on the ground. The most important factors negatively affecting efficiency in the Central Sahel programme were the difficult circumstances in Mali and in Niger, with complicated, time-consuming, administrative procedures hindering efficient implementation of the project.

In Syria, the major impediment to efficiency are travel times between task locations in MAG's area of operations. It was stated that this factor could only be mitigated by having more teams, as the prioritisation of tasks is based around emergencies and

therefore does not allow a more considered combination of tasks that may affect response times negatively. The programme admitted that they also have some redundancies in the overall support structure, an issue they still have to address. Factors beyond MAG's control include the delays due to suspensions of tasks for security reasons. A factor that is still relevant, but to a much lesser extent since the fall of the Assad regime in December 2024. **The MAG programme in Myanmar has worked very efficiently, turning every challenge** (e.g., restricted access due to the security situation or the recent earthquake that shifted priorities) **into an opportunity to come up with an alternative solution to deliver the planned activities** (e.g., conduct of CBAs through mobile phones), **ensuring the donor gets value for money against all odds.**

The significant quantity of land reduction suggests a high level of operational efficiency in the MAG Zimbabwe programme. This is somewhat opposed by the clearance activities which are particularly time-consuming due to the nature of the contamination (see also Note 35). The areas MAG works in are believed to not be suitable to use dogs and large machines as clearance assets. However, the programme – in collaboration with other international MA operators – is currently exploring other possibilities to speed up work and increase efficiency.

6. Findings: National ownership and sustainability

Increased national ownership is a key goal of the sector-wide and MAG's ToC which MAG has clearly fulfilled under the Norwegian funding, particularly by enhancing communities' capacities to deal with the contamination problem, for as long as it persists, and by supporting NMAAs in complying with their obligations related to international conventions. The evaluation has also identified possibilities for improvement related to collaboration with local implementing partners in particular, and in general terms, facilitating the greater sustainability of MAG's work through more systematic project and programme lifecycle planning.

MAG is clearly committed to the enhancement of national ownership, and, depending on specific programme and project goals, focuses on increasing the capacity of the NMAAs and local partners, with related activities improving the capabilities of communities, and MAG's own workforce. Under the Norwegian funding, MAG's work in the Central Sahel, Sri Lanka, Syria and the West Africa programme included a formal capacity development component.

The focus in the Central Sahel and West Africa programme resided in enhancing the NMAAs capacities to manage and coordinate MA activities by improving the LR and IM processes and by supporting them in fulfilling their respective Article 4 and Article 5 clearance obligations, under the CCM and the APMBC. In Syria, in addition to the LR and EORE component, the programme focused on enhancing national ownership through coordination and collaboration with the broader development and humanitarian sector, with particular consideration of the “whole of Syria” approach (see chapter “coordination and collaboration”).

The Sri Lanka programme, on the other hand, aimed to enhance the NGO SHARP's gender-responsive readiness to transition in light of Sri Lanka's completion of its clearance obligations under the APMBC. This chapter focuses on the performance of MAG in achieving these particular goals, while also briefly discussing efforts made in some of these, and other programmes, in terms of enhancing national ownership through capacity building of its own national staff. The findings are therefore presented per theme rather than divided into global and country-specific findings.

MAG's biggest and most obvious capacity development achievement on a global scale, thanks to the Norwegian funding, and in support of enhancing national ownership, is the support provided to

NMAAs by the Central Sahel and West Africa programme in favour of the fulfilment of their respective APMBC and CCM obligations. As mentioned previously in this report (see, chapter “relevance and effectiveness”) MAG clearly deserves credit for the fact that Burkina Faso and Mali have both formally acknowledged the presence of improvised mines on their territory through their respective APMBC Article 7 Reports, with Burkina Faso subsequently also submitting a clearance deadline extension request to address the recognised problem.⁵⁴ **This is an achievement that cannot be overstated.** The problem of improvised mines in Burkina Faso and Mali is very different from the situation in Iraq and Afghanistan, where improvised mines were used as a means to pollute large areas that are now part of the legacy contamination.

In Burkina Faso and Mali (and other African states) however, the presence of improvised mines originates from current and ongoing targeted attacks by non-state armed actors (NSAs). They predominantly remain an isolated problem along targeted axes and locations, and their presence, when discovered, is predominantly dealt with on the spot as part of the security forces counter-improvised explosive device (C-IED) responses, rather than by humanitarian actors through a land release approach. This implies

completely different and challenging circumstances in terms of the fulfilment of the states' APMBC obligations, and it is a fair assumption that both countries would have struggled to take such an exemplary stand without MAG's support under the Norwegian funding. **The Mauritania programme on the other hand, has clearly increased the quality of its Article 7 reports and related deadline extension requests,** as shown in the example on Page 28. MAG's support including enhancing the NMAA's representative's language skills has definitely contributed to this achievement.⁵⁵

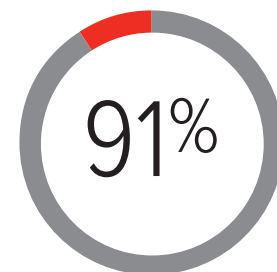


Chart 5: 91% of the surveyed CFP and teachers intend to continue their activity as long as there is an EO threat in their community



In the **West Africa** programme in particular, MAG also succeeded in enhancing the programmes' capacity to manage and coordinate mine action activities effectively. Some of the key achievements include the conduct of two workshops in Senegal in 2022 and 2024, with the aim of updating land release processes and related data collection instruments, the development of 13 NMAS for Guinea-Bissau (in cooperation with the Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining [GICHD]) and training delivered to personnel of the Mauritanian NMAA, covering various subjects including budget preparation and project management.

While the support in favour of the NMAAs has been a clear success in the short term, the sustainability of the outcomes is less clear. For example, in Guinea-Bissau, the absence of international organisations conducting land release activities, and a lack of relevant IM hardware and software hinders the ability of the NMAA to apply newly learned IM skills. Furthermore, insufficient financial resources to expand the clearance activities of the existing national technical capacity continues to negatively affect Mauritania's ability to progress towards completion of its APMBC and CCM clearance obligations. In addition, in Senegal, internal quarrels at the level of the NMAA (see also Note 4) delay the implementation of reviewed land release processes and data collection tools.

The building up of capacities in communities through the conduct of CBAs, the training of CFPs in Burkina Faso, and the training of CFPs and teachers in Syria has been successful, with some positive signs in terms of sustainability: over 90% of the CFPs and teachers surveyed expressed their commitment to continue working to keep their communities safe as long as there is a threat, regardless of anyone's plan to remove the threat or not. Also, the CBAs conducted in Senegal left the communities empowered and with the feeling that they know how to stay safe until the contamination will be cleared. Evidence shows that while demands for the implementation of further activities (specifically, removing the contamination and subsequent livelihoods support) persist, **communities experience a sense of empowerment and take ownership of the problem:** they feel well informed with regard to where the contamination is, what the threat is, how to avoid it, and how to ensure that no one in the community gets harmed by it.

The **capacity development of local organisations** was a specific output and outcome for the **Central Sahel** and the **Sri Lanka** programme. **The work with local partners in the Central Sahel programme**

Workshop organised by MAG for stakeholders from Burkina Faso, Mali, Niger, and Nigeria to discuss on the implementation of the APMBC by West African states facing contamination of improvised mines



Extract of the guideline / leaflet that supplemented the MAG ToT activity provided to CFPs Burkina Faso

was only successful to a certain extent.

While the outputs were delivered as intended, it seems to have left both sides (MAG and the implementing partners) somewhat dissatisfied. MAG felt that the local implementing partners struggled in working towards the desired quality standards and agreed deployment terms, requiring closer supervision than expected. On the other hand, the local partner felt that they had to deliver more than could be expected for the money received.

A similar experience was shared by the West Africa programme in relation to one of the national implementing partners in Guinea-Bissau, while work with the other, a MA operator already trained before collaborating with MAG, was perceived to have gone well. **This suggests that in the Central Sahel programme, different goals may have competed with each other. Expectations should be managed when assessing the standard of results achieved by organisations being supported with capacity development.** It may be unrealistic to expect the standard delivered by established, experienced MA operators to be mirrored by those beginning their journey in the MA sector.

The capacity development activities implemented in Sri Lanka, with the aim to enhance SHARP's gender-responsive readiness to transition was also challenging. The interaction with SHARP was reported as being very one-sided, with SHARP unreceptive to the activities offered to the extent that had been expected, implying that the initial needs assessment, conducted in the project design phase, may have been overly ambitious.

The evaluation concludes that despite considerable efforts related to capacity development, converting these into the outcome of “sustainable nationally owned MA through improved governance and with increased local implementation” remains challenging for MAG and requires more thorough consideration in future project design and in programme life cycles in general. The factors that are assessed as

making capacity building sustainable must be carefully considered, and lead to true national ownership. **In any case, it requires an in-depth assessment of the needs for capacity development, whereby identified needs MAG feels it cannot respond to (e.g., providing IM software to NMAAs) should not be ignored, as it is exactly these unfulfilled needs that can be the factors that impede the sustainability of the capacity development activities provided by MAG.**

Instead, MAG should increase its efforts to collaborate with partners able to respond to these needs. Lastly, it should not be forgotten that many local NGOs, and to a lesser extent NMAAs, are reliant on international funding to carry out their duties, which constitutes a risk to national ownership and sustainability goals. Consequently, a component that should be assessed when investing in long-term partnerships is the consideration of measures to increase partners' financial independence and stability. A further recommendation is that capacity building for government agencies, such as the security forces for technical activities (including clearance and EOD), or ministries and departments responsible for health, social welfare or education for EORE and victim assistance related services, may be the best option to increase true national ownership in preparation for sustainable residual contamination management.

While MAG clearly has the potential to improve and expand work with local partners, **it should be acknowledged that the internal capacity building for MAG's workforce which also contributes to national ownership, is a positive and strong point organisationally.** In all of the assessed programmes, MAG was found to engage in the capacity development of its own personnel and in many programmes, went beyond what is required to ensure each individual can fulfil its particular duty.

Many of the MAG employees feel empowered and see a perspective for their lives beyond their work for MAG. This was found to be particularly true in Sri Lanka where MAG, to a far greater extent than



for SHARP and in other MAG programmes, prepares its staff for transition following completion of clearance. A survey conducted with a selection of employees in the Sri Lanka programme showed that over 97% of the surveyed personnel are happy with the training opportunities provided and feel that it improved their skills and confidence.

Although not a specific target of this evaluation, but rather to supplement data, a similar survey was conducted with a sample of the staff in the Iraq programme, leading to a similarly positive result. The community liaison and survey/clearance personnel (representing all levels of position), who participated in FGDs during the evaluation

teams' visit in the Lebanon also reported feeling strengthened. They expressed their confidence to have gained capacities empowering them beyond working for MAG, with an impressive appetite for entrepreneurship, stating that all they would need to “fly”, is financial support to start their own businesses (while not wishing to do so as long as they can work for MAG).⁵⁶ Finally, it should also be mentioned that the Zimbabwe programme, despite not having a dedicated budget line to do so, engaged in some informal capacity development of its staff in preparation for eventual demobilisation, including providing technical training for poultry and farming, using its own compound to facilitate an ongoing project.

All of MAG's personnel in Sri Lanka – including the deminers in the picture funded by Norway – have opportunities to benefit from capacity development activities beyond the skills they require for their work with MAG

7. Findings: Cross-cutting principles with a focus on gender

MAG has invested significantly towards gender balance. Today, MAG “lives” gender through a complete assimilation on all levels in the assessed programmes. This is an achievement that also ensures gender mainstreaming throughout MAG’s activities and empowers women in beneficiary communities and partner organisations. Through-out the programmes, MAG also demonstrates conflict sensitivity, and through the diversity represented in its own staff, ensures different beneficiary groups are reached, and approached appropriately. However, the evaluation findings suggest that inclusion and the environment are cross-cutting principles that should be considered more thoroughly in MAG’s programmes and projects.



Similar to the previous chapter, the findings related to cross-cutting principles are presented per criteria, with some aspects highlighted for particular programmes, rather than as global and complete country-specific insights.

Gender

Throughout the evaluation, the assessors have experienced genuine enthusiasm, when discussing the programmes’ efforts towards gender balance. While MAG has strengthened its approach to gender (and inclusion) through the appointment of a global advisor, the extent to which programmes engage with the topic appears dependent on the management’s personal preferences and priorities. However, the majority of the programmes see gender equality as a core consideration in their programme strategy. Where this is not the case, gender is still seen as an important cross-cutting principle that is considered to the maximum possible extent, depending on the context, and nature of activities implemented, whereby efforts to promote gender remain more selective, rather than through complete embedment in the overall programme strategy.

Both the Lebanon and Sri Lanka programmes have a very strong focus on gender, where

female staff are competent, feel safe, and have equal opportunities and career pathways, based on a strong set of endorsed gender and safeguarding policies. The MAG Lebanon programme has also advocated for gender equality on the level of the national MA sector by supporting workshops aiming to raise stakeholders’ awareness of gender issues, which led to the identification of a gender focal point at LMAC, and the creation of a MA gender, diversity and inclusion (GDI) steering committee.⁵⁷

Unfortunately, with the change of command within LMAC in the first quarter of 2025, and a newly appointed gender focal point, the efforts towards effective gender mainstreaming in the MA sector have lost some of its dynamism, however, MAG continue to advocate strongly for it. The Sri Lanka programme was the only project country that had a specific gender related objective under the Norwegian funded project, aiming to enhance gender-responsive

readiness of SHARP’s workforce to transition from demining to alternative employment opportunities. However, currently, it is not entirely clear what “gender-responsive” in that context meant. The fact that less than 10% of the SHARP employees who benefitted from the financial literacy training and individual counselling provided were women, indicates that the design of, and goalsetting

The MAG Lebanon programme has advocated for gender equality

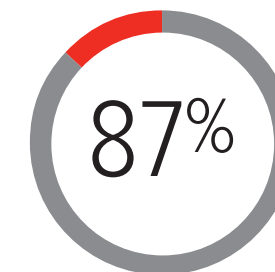


Chart 6: 87% of the respondents of the survey with the MAG programmes believe that the promotion of gender equality is a core consideration in their programme strategy

for this activity, was not well considered (see chapter “relevance and effectiveness”).

For demining, no one did think that a woman can do the job. Hard work was required to prove that a woman is as good as a man.”

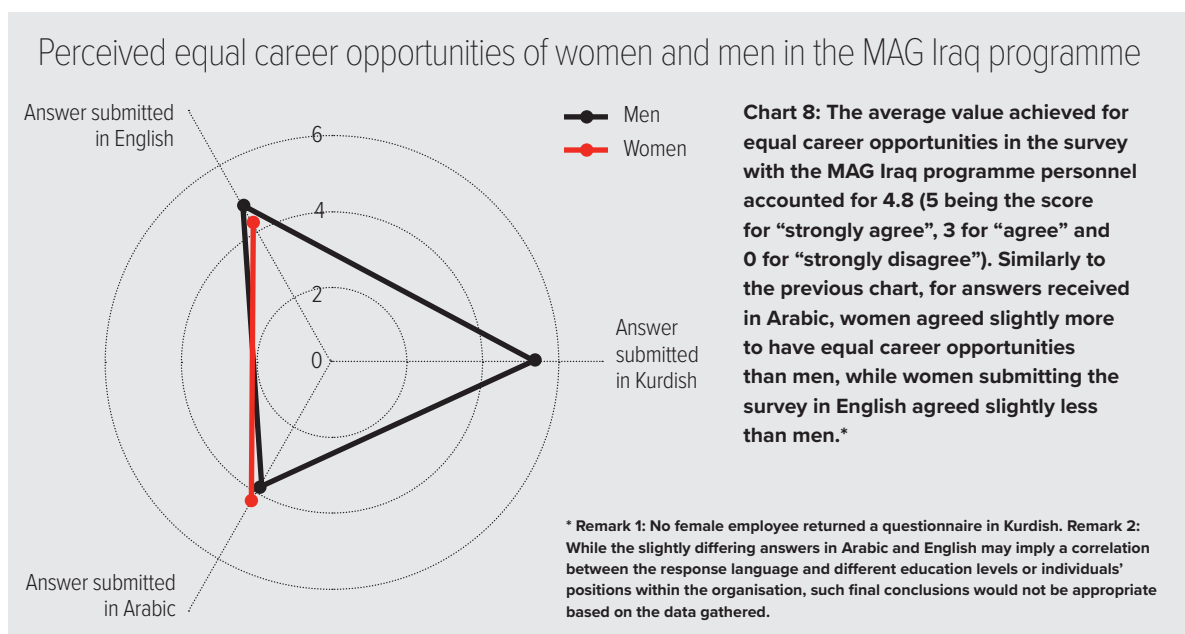
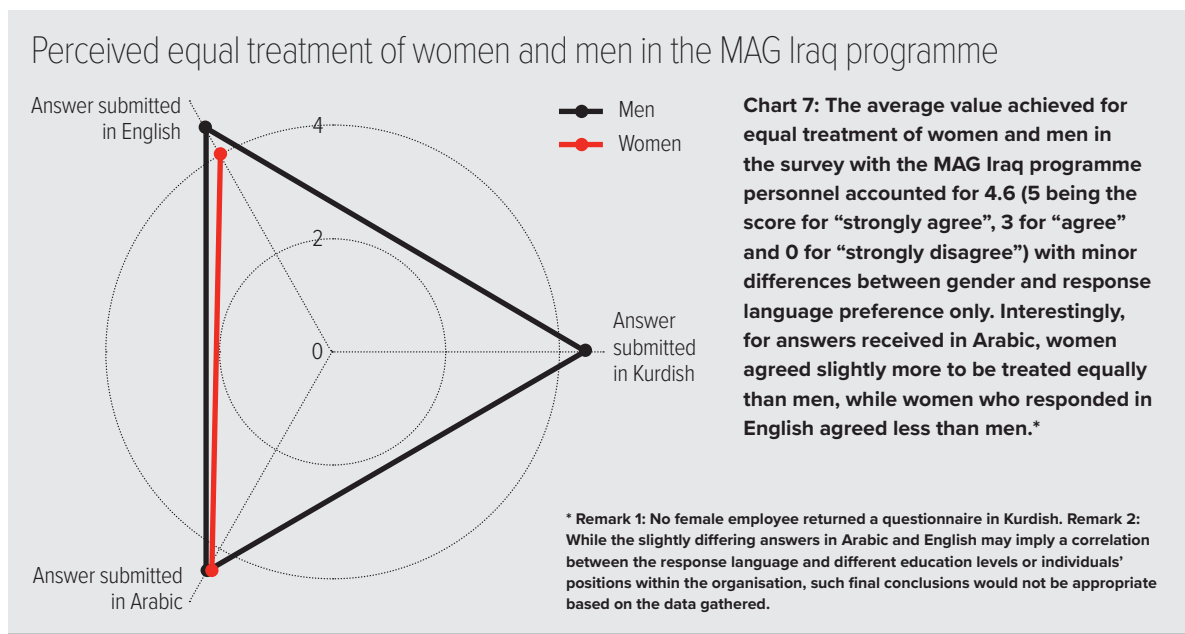
– Female deminer in the MAG Iraq programme

For the Iraq programme, gender sensitivity is as crucial as conflict sensitivity, requiring the careful consideration of gender and diversity in relation to the differing cultural, ethnic, religious, and linguistic context throughout MAG’s programmes, to ensure an appropriate working environment can be ensured for all.

Positive feedback was provided by female employees participating in the online FGD during the evaluation, reporting that they feel that they have equal opportunities and are fairly treated.

For data triangulation, a voluntary survey was shared with MAG Iraq’s national staff in Kurdish, Arabic and English language. 79 employees participated, which however, unfortunately only included around 14% women.

The following charts confirm the general positive feedback with little difference between gender and language preference chosen.



Diversity and inclusion

Very diverse gender-responsive measures are implemented throughout the various MAG programmes. Examples include services related to menstrual health and hygiene, as well as maternity and breastfeeding policies, including the provision of infant and childcare services, with the most consequent example being the Zimbabwe programme; providing a maternity support house at the field base, allowing female deminers to return to work after maternity leave while living with their infant and continuing breastfeeding during field deployment periods. Across the assessed programmes, MAG promotes participation and leadership of women within MAG, its partner organisations, and the broader MA sector, and engages with communities to achieve the same, including for marginalised groups. However, as previously stated, the extent of the focus on such activities differs between programmes.

MAG considers diverse cultural, religious and ethnic backgrounds of individuals when designing and implementing projects, ensuring its activities cause no harm and are equally beneficial for all. Through more and more locally recruited staff (e.g., the Lao

PDR programme has now achieved a ratio of international to national staff of approx. 1:110) diversity in MAG’s programmes is generally aligned to, and mirrors, the local representation of different cultural, religious and ethnic groups. MAG is universally considerate of distinctions and creates material appropriate to religious and cultural norms in the relevant context – a factor not only relevant to ensure all affected groups can be reached, but also a core consideration for conflict sensitivity.

At that time [when I first met MAG] I didn’t think it was possible for me to work in a job other than the grocery shop?”

– Female deminer in the MAG Zimbabwe programme

Language is another issue that is well considered, with MAG’s community liaison staff consistently being multilingual and disseminating EORE material in as many local languages as possible – an effort that cannot be underestimated. The implementation of the Norwegian funded project in Chin state in Myanmar for example required considering that the population speaks roughly 19 different languages.⁵⁸

In 2018, MAG conducted a pilot utilising Facebook’s advertising tool to deliver simple graphics to at-risk communities in Ninewa governorate, Iraq. The success of the pilot paved the way to expand digital EORE means which are today widely used in many of MAG’s programmes

In terms of inclusion, this evaluation focussed on assessing to what extent persons with disabilities are considered in MAG's activities. The recent appointment of the previously mentioned global focal point, and the drafting of a new global disability inclusion guide, demonstrate acknowledgement that **the inclusion of persons with disabilities has not been a particular focus and strength of MAG in the past.**⁵⁹

This shortcoming is widely recognised in the assessed MAG programmes and efforts are made to increase inclusivity of face-to-face EORE by moving sessions to more accessible locations, or conducting them at the residence of persons with mobility impairments to ensure that they could participate. It is important to mention that MAG's significant investment in digital EORE since 2018 has greatly helped to increase universal accessibility of messages for people that are otherwise difficult to reach, including persons with limited mobility or sight and hearing impairments, who benefit from messages delivered using subtitles and spoken word audio.⁶⁰

“We have 100% equal opportunities. I got the job because I work hard for it.”
– Female Technical Field Manager in the MAG Lao PDR programme

However, there is still room for improvement. More programmes – while providing EORE material appropriate to diverse cultural, religious and ethnic groups including minorities in different languages – should attempt to create specific materials for face-to-face EORE in particular, aligned with the needs of persons with disabilities, such as e.g. videos incorporating sign language, or braille leaflets – an approach the Lebanon programme has already implemented.

While MAG does not provide victim assistance, programmes could enhance their efforts to systematically collect disaggregated victim data and to network with organisations and institutions providing services to persons with

disabilities, including to victims from mines and other EO. This includes as well – if, and when identified during community liaison work – to refer such persons to the relevant services.⁶¹ In the assessed programmes, only the Syria and the Myanmar programme provided referrals, with Myanmar also supporting victims from mines and other EO through emergency assistance and cash grants – a type of support that however, can only be achieved through close collaboration with subject matter expert consortia and partnerships.

Conflict sensitivity

When working in a humanitarian and development environment, and in MA in particular, it is important to consider the legacy of violence and conflict that exists amongst affected communities. The wellbeing of the beneficiaries is partially dependent on the receipt of EORE and clearance, however, their wellbeing is also heavily related to the sensitive deployment of such activities.

Conflict sensitivity was found to be a strength of MAG globally. While much of the success of its conflict sensitive approach is not necessarily formalised, it is enshrined informally in the approach of its management and community liaison personnel. By hiring consistently from local populations, MAG ensures a good understanding of the conflict history of an area and predisposes activity towards a conflict sensitive approach. MAG centres conflict sensitivity in much of its work, committing to ‘do no harm’ through its actions. Programmes are designed to be sensitive to the trauma suffered by people in conflict areas, but also to avoid inflaming tensions. MAG works with International Alert regularly to conduct training and conflict sensitivity and for assistance when designing certain material.

Myanmar offers a good example of a holistic conflict sensitivity approach, referring not just to how activities are designed, but also how employees and volunteers operate. Almost by definition, the work in Myanmar has to be conflict sensitive, as without a sensitive approach, MAG would be entirely unable

to function in the country at this time. The conflict sensitivity assessment conducted by International Alert in **Iraq** before the merging of the two operational bases, and the peace and conflict analysis conducted by Fight for Humanity in **Senegal** to inform project design, are two examples of a more formalised approach to conflict sensitivity.⁶² While another evaluation report expressed some criticism related to the quality of the assessment conducted in Iraq, it nevertheless seems to have worked well, with the merging of the two operational bases completed successfully and without some of the anticipated difficulties.⁶³

“MAG showed that they understand that their actions can either boost the peace process or undermine it, depending on how they engage with different actors.”
– Fight for Humanity

The West Africa programme reported that they benefitted greatly from the insights in the assessment report produced for Senegal, and used the recommendations to design activities in a conflict sensitive way, e.g. by considering how CBAs can be best designed to also contribute positively to communities' social cohesion. Although not related to conflict sensitivity in its traditional meaning,⁶⁴ it is worthwhile mentioning that the Lebanon programme as an example, also offers psychological support and sessions with psychologists for its staff – a service aiming to reduce any negative impact of the work in conflict areas on MAG's employees' long-term mental health.

The good experience made with the formalised conflict sensitivity assessments conducted in Iraq and Senegal suggest that MAG should look into more systematic approaches of integrating formal conflict sensitivity activities in programmes globally. With funding of the government of the Netherlands, MAG, with support from International Alert, and following workshops conducted in Iraq and Ukraine, is currently looking into possibilities to develop a more systematic approach, e.g. by integrating more thorough guidance into global guidelines for project design.⁶⁵

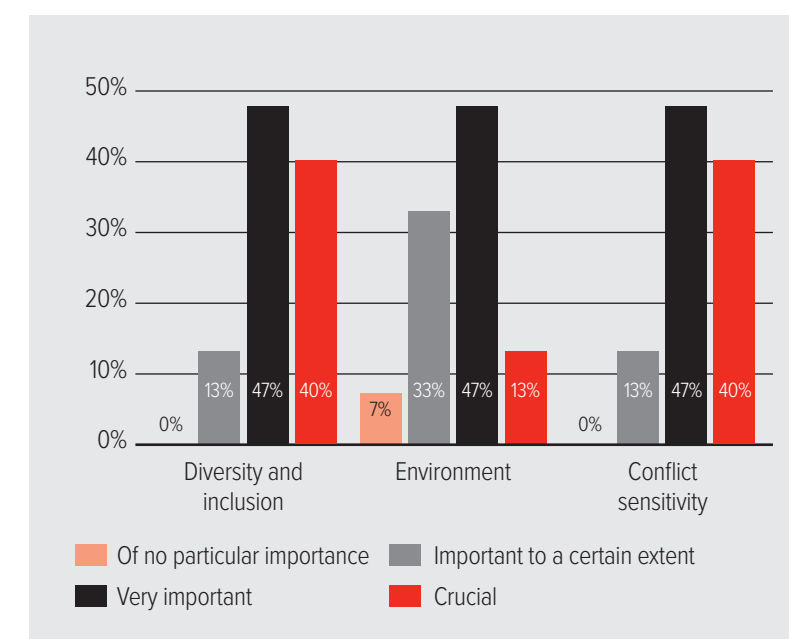
Environment

MAG demonstrates awareness in terms of the organisations' environmental footprint but could do so more systematically.

Measures such as installing solar panels, minimising paper use, optimising travel through carsharing, etc. are part of the efforts across all assessed programmes to ensure daily operations are environmentally friendly. However, the importance environmental considerations are given in the different programmes differ, and in general, the environment is seen as a less crucial cross-cutting principle (compared with other principles) to ensure successful delivery of activities (see Chart 9).

The varying interest in environmental factors in the different programmes suggests that **a more systematic approach to environmental management would be beneficial to enhance programmes' attention** – an area of improvement MAG has already acknowledged: Based on the findings of a recently completed pilot of the “Green Field Tool”, an assessment tool used by other stakeholders in the sector, MAG is now working on developing its own Environmental Management System.⁶⁶ The aim is, to design a tool that is better aligned with MAG's organisational and operational structure and processes, and to suitably mainstream environmental impact assessments on all levels (task, country/programme, globally),

Chart 9: Data from the multi-country survey conducted with the concerned MAG programmes shows that environmental considerations are seen as cross-cutting principle less crucial than others for successful project delivery





MAG deminers in Lao PDR

and throughout all stages of activity delivery (input, output, outcome level). The system is currently piloted in the Vietnam programme with a rollout planned in some of MAG's biggest programmes worldwide in the next few months.

Globally, MAG has recently also completed a carbon inventory for 2024 assessing scope 1, 2, and 3 emissions across all programmes.⁶⁷ The final results are currently still undergoing a third party quality assurance exercise but upon the finalised validation, the result will set the MAG carbon baseline for the planning of future emission reduction. MAG is exploring strategies to set out a global emission reduction pathway aiming to meet the strategic commitment of reducing absolute emissions by 45% by 2030, in line with the Paris Agreement on Climate Change.⁶⁸

A commendable initiative of MAG for the benefit of the whole MA community is the pilot study assessing the relationship between clearance, the subsequent land use and environmental damage, which was conducted in Cambodia in 2024 in collaboration with IMPACT.⁶⁹ While further research is still required, the study gives some evidence of vegetation loss, biodiversity decline, soil degradation, increased erosion, carbon sequestration, and loss of biomass following clearance activities – either as direct consequence or indirect outcome from environmentally damaging land use following clearance.

Programmes are aware of such negative consequences and outcomes and have started to implement some mitigation measures. For example, the Iraq programme

creates fire breaks in forested areas contaminated with EO to avoid wildfires following the disposal of EO, and the Cambodia programme uses smaller vegetation clearance machinery rather than heavier ground preparation machines to reduce soil compaction and preserve ground vegetation. Unsustainable land use is a concern that was raised in the MAG programmes in **Cambodia, Lao PDR** and in **Zimbabwe** specifically (see chapter “relevance and effectiveness”) and there are some initiatives to address this problem – e.g., in Cambodia, under a different grant, where the programme started to cooperate with an NGO promoting environmentally friendly and sustainable land use. **MAG is encouraged to continue the initiated research for the benefit of the whole MA sector. As next step, MAG has already organised an internal workshop to discuss lessons learned and identify a way forward including through investing more in establishing collaborations to support environmentally sustainable land use following clearance.**

Lastly and conversely, it is important to mention that **MAG's operations itself are also increasingly affected by climate change and extreme weather events** such as heatwaves, droughts, heavy rainfall, wildfires, etc., These events engender unpredictable conditions affecting operational efficiency by causing protracted downtimes, reduced work hours and challenging soil conditions for clearance. While programmes report to try to adapt to these conditions (e.g., by shifting working hours in the **Zimbabwe** and **Iraq** programmes), there is a limitation of what adaptations are possible without jeopardising safety and effectiveness of activities. As none of the measurable targets identified under the Norwegian funding were not achieved due to environmental factors, MAG has certainly managed these challenges well. Nevertheless, **MAG may want to put more emphasis and consideration to climate change factors affecting operational efficiency in future projects** (e.g. by considering flexible downtimes helping to mitigate negative consequences of unpredictable extreme weather conditions).

8. Conclusion: Lessons learned and recommendations

This evaluation revealed a number of lessons learned – either important globally or relevant under specific circumstances in a particular context, country, programme or project. While additional lessons learned have been integrated into the findings chapters; discussing the different evaluation criteria, this chapter aims to summarise the lessons learned and recommendations that are believed to be of importance for the consideration of MAG on the whole as an organisation.

The evaluation identifies some room for improvement in project design and goal setting. Evidence suggests that identified outputs and outcomes – while being aligned with MAG's ToC and donors' priorities – are not always responding optimally to countries' needs. Furthermore, the data collection and analysis to internally monitor progress and evaluate achievements is not always suitably targeted in alignment with the identified goals.

The programmes concerned are well aware of the flaws, where such exist, but in general, lack resources to adequately address them – a problem that can be mitigated by developing the relevant skillsets on a programme or regional level, or through more guidance, support and/or oversight from MAG Manchester.

Relevance and effectiveness: MAG provided relevant and effective interventions by virtue of Norway's flexible funding over a period of more than three years, which helped greatly to maximise the impact of the activities conducted. Having the possibility to shift funding within the framework of agreed projects, to where and for what it is most needed, while at the same time having the security of the funding over several years, is a comfortable pre-condition.

Room for improvement is present in terms of the management of such flexible grants, particularly in relation to project design and goal setting. The proposed activities under the Norwegian funding were relevant and effective. However, there is some room for improvement in project design and goal setting. Evidence suggests that identified outputs and outcomes – while being aligned with MAG's ToC and the donor's priorities – did not always respond fully to countries' needs, and in some cases were also not feasible to achieve.

Furthermore, the data management to monitor progress towards agreed outputs and outcomes is an area that can be improved throughout all programmes to some extent – be it in terms of which data is collected (or not), how it is processed, analysed, and

ultimately presented to aid transparent, universal reporting. **The evaluation team therefore proposes the following action points:**

1 Increase centralised oversight of programmes' project design phases

a) to ensure that the proposed activities give evidence of assessed needs in the relevant MA programme and provide sufficient explanation of how the activities will contribute to address these needs, and b) to review whether proposed activities, related outputs, outcomes, indicators, and targets are aligned and realistic (based on a thorough risk assessment and in conjunction with the available budget).

2 Ensure data collection, analysis and presentation is effectively targeted at providing the evidence required to

demonstrate achievements on an outcome level in particular (e.g., evidence of improved livelihoods and safer behaviour). This includes as well to provide programmes with more guidance regarding what quantitative and qualitative evidence is expected to what extent (e.g., in terms of conducting household surveys and FGDs versus conducting case studies to demonstrate improved livelihoods).

3 Standardise donor reporting to ideally form one comprehensive, concise report

covering all project activities implemented under the Norwegian funding, across all programmes.⁷⁰

Coordination and collaboration: MAG works consistently well with other MA operators and national authorities and remains humble in its achievements within the MA sector; in many cases coordinating significantly beyond what is the requirement to achieve the expected results and without designated budget lines. Similarly, MAG works well with local authorities and communities providing a 'win-win' relationship; where communities' feel both cared for and empowered, while MAG benefits from eased access, information sharing and support in implementing further activities. Potential for improvement exists in the collaboration with local implementing partners and actors from the broader



humanitarian and development sector. **The recommended action point to mitigate the current weakness is:**

4 Consideration to what extent the collaboration with development and humanitarian actors shall be institutionalised and fostered.

Currently such collaboration, where it exists, materialises predominantly in an ad-hoc manner and is more apparent in emergency contexts. MAG, in alignment with its ToC, should expand and professionalise these relationships and take a stronger stand towards supporting improved livelihoods, environmentally sustainable land use, etc., and provide programmes with more guidance related to the expected scope and scale of such partnerships.

Efficiency: MAG delivers excellent value for money and in general, has a very high operational efficiency, with optimal resources deployed for the relevant context. However,

there is a potential for further improvement through more thorough and standardised analysis of the relationship between programme, investment and innovation lifecycles. Also (admittedly predominantly forced through significant funding cuts), MAG has identified previously unrecognised (or unaddressed) redundancies at the organisational level of individual programmes. Important lessons learned from this process should be shared and used more broadly. To further increase efficiency, and to prepare programmes to absorb any potential future shocks it is proposed to:

5 Expand and/or use existing internal learning mechanisms more systematically, to ensure lessons learned related to optimising efficiency are shared between programmes. However, this most likely requires that these mechanisms are centrally managed, including the organisation, hosting the moderation and documentation of findings, and where suitable, or deemed

A MAG EOORE session in Casamance, Senegal

necessary, global guidance is given in terms of follow-up actions.

6 Develop a standardised approach to assess the best balance between investment, innovation and programme lifecycle, by comparing increasing maintenance costs and the decreasing productivity of aging (mechanical) assets, against the cost of new, more efficient and innovative technologies, while also considering the maturity of the project and its remaining lifespan.

National ownership and sustainability: MAG, through its capacity development activities under the Norwegian funding, has clearly contributed to national ownership. This is particularly evident when viewing the support provided to communities (including the training of CFPs) and the engagements involving the NMAAs. However, such activities are only sustainable if the needs of the capacity development recipients are considered and addressed holistically.

An area of improvement which still requires mastering is the challenge of finding optimum methods to cooperate with and enhance the capacity of local implementing partners. This is linked with a requirement of clear long-term programme strategies to ensure capacity development efforts towards sustainable national ownership are aligned with the programme lifecycle and the anticipated point of exit. **The evaluation team therefore proposes to:**

7 Acknowledge all identified capacity development needs in the project design phase, even if MAG cannot, or does not, plan to address them. Instead, MAG is encouraged to seek partnerships to address needs holistically as otherwise, unaddressed ones may impede the sustainability of MAG's capacity development.

8 Carefully consider to what extent capacity building for local partners towards national ownership can or should be linked with targets related to the delivery of MA activities, as it may be

unrealistic to expect the standard delivered by established, experienced MA operators to be mirrored by those beginning their journey in the MA sector.

9 Consider potential partners' long-term financial independence and stability, as a lack of such constitutes a risk to national ownership and sustainability. If the risk is accepted, the capacity development plan should include measures to increase the partners' monetary resilience.

10 Align capacity building activities to the long-term country, regional and global level strategies relating to the anticipated exit point, rather than to short-term project and funding cycles.

Gender and other Cross-Cutting Principles:

Over recent years, MAG has successfully invested in, and subsequently achieved, gender equality to the extent possible in relation to most prevalent context – a great achievement MAG should carry forward.

The organisation also ensures diversity and conflict sensitivity, not only as a principle, but as a crucial requirement to ensure its activities are effective and reach all target groups. However, other cross-cutting principles, although considered in general, should be granted more attention in future project design and implementation. In particular, **MAG is recommended to:**

11 Increase the inclusion of persons with disabilities, including victims from mines and other EO, by linking victim assistance services more systematically (e.g., referrals) with other MA activities and by considering how the general inclusivity of EORE material can be enhanced.

12 Consider environmental factors more systematically in all programmes, not only to ensure the programmes' environmental footprint remains as small as possible, but also to explore further opportunities to link MA with environmentally sustainable land use and measures to enhance beneficiaries' climate change resilience following land release.

Annexes

- A *Case studies: Lebanon, Senegal, and Sri Lanka*
- B *Complete overview of project goals, outcomes, priority evaluation criteria and questions per programme*
- C *List of KIs and FGDs conducted*
- D *MAG's Humanitarian Mine Action Theory of Change*

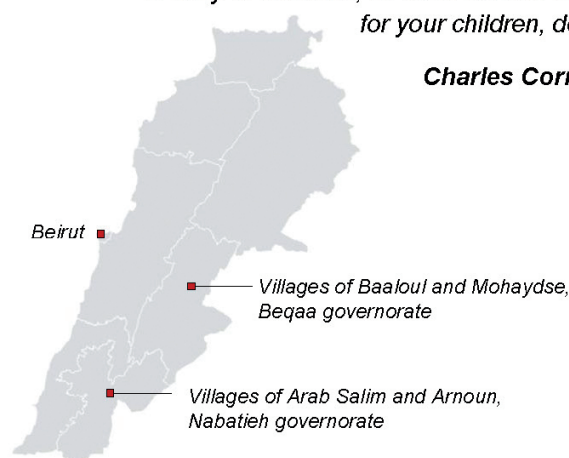


Juggling resources between emergency responses and improving long-term livelihoods

MAG's contribution to the people of Lebanon's resilience

"O Lady of Lebanon, oh wide-shaded cedar, make of your green branches a protective roof for your children, despite the threats of a cyclone."

Charles Corm, The Sacred Mountain



The drive south from Beirut and through the fertile Beqaa valley leads past much land previously cleared by MAG, nestled amidst gentle hills now used to grow grapes for Lebanon's fruity white wine – a significant growth industry. The valley was heavily affected by the previous conflict with neighbouring Syria, with the hilltops used for defensive positions, and aircraft or artillery used to attack them, including with cluster munitions. Baaloul's mayors speak of a community that remains strong but vulnerable, suffering from a weak economy, and several years of supporting

Syrian refugees. Affected already by climate change, the village's spring has recently dried up for the first time ever, forcing the municipality to provide water supplies to households. The majority of the land in the valley is privately owned with clearance allowing a significant increase in agricultural use and enabling safe movement between properties and nearby communities. Although it does not help prevent continued departures to Beirut and abroad, agriculture provides a stable income, which – with more long-term stability in the country, could attract more people to return or settle in the Beqaa valley. Baaloul village is striving to help itself and invest in the future, but the remnants of a conflict almost 20 years ago remain present and are yet another factor holding them back. While the mayors of Baaloul understand that emergency tasks to respond to the new contamination from the recent conflict has current priority, they hope for re-enforced clearance support from MAG to open more land for agricultural purposes.



Picture to the left: View of the fertile Beqaa valley where cleared land is immediately used for agricultural purposes. Picture to the right: MAG community liaison manager discussing the progress of a cluster munition clearance task with the two mayors of Baaloul.



June 2025



Khaled Keitaz with the house he is renting for his family in the background.

The hillside was cleared by MAG with the support of the Norwegian government.



"I'm not worried about contamination. The children can play safely around the house. We know it has been cleared by MAG."

*Khaled Keitaz, 29-year-old father
Mhaidse village, Beqaa governorate*

An hour further down the road in Mohaydse, 29-year-old Khaled Keitaz shares a similar story, explaining that the economic situation remains tenuous and is affecting his employment as mechanic, as spare parts that have traditionally been sourced from the south are now harder to attain and more expensive due to the new conflict; reducing profit margins and the quantity of work that can be processed. Like many others, Khaled wishes to leave Lebanon in hope for a better future for his family. However, for now, he has rented part of a house in Mohaydse and is relieved that the surroundings were cleared by MAG, allowing the young family to gather with friends outdoors, and their children to play safely around the house.

Life is different for the people in Arab Salim and Arnoun. The two villages in Nabatieh governorate have both suffered recent airstrikes, leading to new contamination caused by ammunition that has been kicked out from Hezbollah held ammunition store-houses. The people who fled from the attacks are returning fast, as they do not wish to become a burden for the relatives who gave them temporary refuge. Yet what they find, coming back home, is threatening and makes it difficult to return to normality. Houses are damaged, garden plots and orchards are scattered with debris and ammunition, families dread sending their children back to school as explosive ordnance may lurk along the way. The flexible Norwegian funding has helped greatly to mitigate this threat for returnees, allowing MAG to re-prioritise and send risk

education and clearance teams to affected villages immediately. A race against time explains Mustafa Salih, the Technical Operations Manager (TOM): In Arnoun, where MAG currently works on a rubble removal and building clearance task, work is slow and has to stop multiple times per hour to let local people pass through the public road that runs right along the area to be cleared.

Lebanon is a country at the centre of a region experiencing significant strife. Its people show both impressive resilience and understandable frustration, given the presence of yet another challenge added to their daily lives from new contamination and the delayed clearance of legacy contamination; as mine action activities have to focus on emergency responses. Under the lead of the well-established Lebanon Mine Action Centre (LMAC), continuation of clearance in Lebanon is more important than ever to help improve livelihoods and to ensure Lebanon can fulfil its clearance obligations under the Convention for Cluster Munitions (CCM) as of May 2030.



Building clearance and rubble removal task in Arnoun village, Nabatieh governorate: A race against time as people are returning quickly following the attacks.

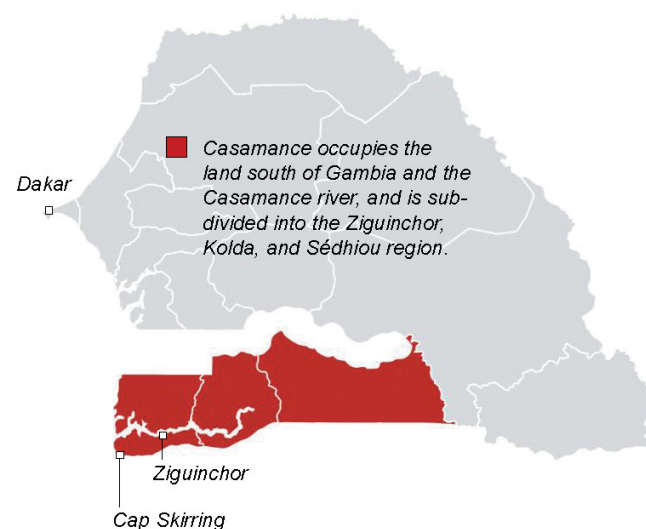
June 2025

Casamance: A region at a turning point

MAG's work in Senegal creates the pre-conditions to get the job done

"Capacity development of national mine action institutions is as important as implementing field operations – they need to be able to manage ongoing operations."

Representative at the Norway Embassy in Dakar, Senegal



ties no longer support the independence struggle and instead hope for development support, which President Bassirou Diomaye Faye has promised through his plan to invest around USD 88 million in support of economic development of the region, including a budget designated to demining.

While Senegal has clearance obligations under the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention (APMBC) with a current deadline of 1 March 2026, the impact of the contamination and importance of demining efforts only becomes tangible once traveling through the region and talking to local communities. What should be a short drive from the biggest city in Casamance (Ziguinchor), to Katouré village,

Passengers disembarking from the plane at Cap Skirring, in the Casamance region of Senegal, are greeted by warm winds and the strong smell of the sea nearby. Holiday feelings awake, and for a moment, one is tempted to forget the local conflict that was started in 1982 by the Casamance Democratic Forces Movement (MFDC) and has still not completely ceased. While several peace agreements have failed in the past, the most recent one, signed in February 2025, is seen as a landmark towards lasting peace in Senegal's southern region, as circumstances have changed significantly: Local communi-

"People need to be reminded of the threat all the time. If they find a lot of explosive ordnance, they become ignorant."

*Papa Abdou Diedhou,
MAG trained
community focal point
of Katouré village*



June 2025

just 10km southwest, takes an hour. The direct route is still contaminated, with the village remaining accessible exclusively by a major diversion, ultimately leading through a forested area that can only be crossed at walking pace. Farmers in Katouré find explosive ordnance almost daily – keeping Papa Abdou Diedhiou, the MAG trained community focal point (CFP) busy, as villagers sometimes move items to get them out of the way, despite the Senegalese army's explosive ordnance disposal (EOD) units usually responding efficiently to reported threats. Very similar stories are told in Dialankine and Kandiadiou village – both around two hours north of Ziguinchor, closer to the Gambian border. The contamination causes fear and hinders movement, but the local population shrugs: They have learned to live with the threat, which is one of many, yet the most life-threatening challenge they live with – this is also thanks to MAG's risk education activities delivered under the Norwegian funding.

While another international operator conducts clearance in support of Senegal's progress towards its clearance obligations under the APMBC, MAG, in addition to risk education activities, conducted contamination baseline assessments (CBAs) and non-technical surveys. These assessments aid the national mine action authority (NMAA) to gain a better understanding of the remaining contamination, while they also enhance communities' social cohesion and resilience. However, mapped contamination requires adequate follow-up action in compliance with the land release principles outlined in the international mine action standards (IMAS).

In addition, it has to be ensured that data gathered during the assessments is processed in an appropriate information management system (IMS) and subsequently utilised as a baseline for future activities. MAG therefore organised workshops to update and align Senegal's land release processes to IMAS, including related data collection forms.

MAG has also played an active role in advocating for more support for the Senegalese mine action programme. Amongst others, these efforts have resulted in a 'round-table' for interested parties (with representatives from 12 embassies participating) which – with the support of MAG – was facilitated by the Swiss embassy in June 2025. In a short time and with a tight budget, MAG has made a tangible difference in Senegal: The contamination is better understood by both the NMAA and communities, and the NMAA has attained the knowledge and skills to plan and report on land release operations in accordance with IMAS. Through risk education activities and the training of CFPs, communities are better prepared for new encounters of explosive ordnance, and there is a genuine interest to invest in the development of Casamance – the only way forward to ensure sustainable peace. Yet there is work that remains to be done: Not all affected communities have benefitted from a CBA yet, and the clearance capacity to follow up assessments and support development work is limited. However, the contamination problem is not huge and with commitment from a few key actors, it is possible to get the job done.



"Mapping the contamination with the help of MAG has brought us together as a community. We now have a better understanding of the situation and can also explain it to visitors."

Local residents from Kandiadiou village

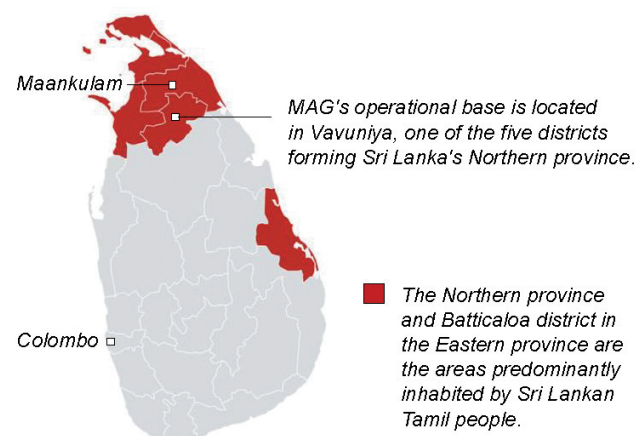
June 2025

Visible impact at every turn

MAG's work in Sri Lanka improves the livelihoods of local communities in the country's neglected Northern province

"Clearance allows more income and small businesses. People need clearance in order to make investments in the region worthwhile."

Sri Lanka Regional Mine Action Centre



Sri Lanka is a country of multitudes, known for its beautiful landscapes, abundant wildlife, beautiful beaches, and successful cricket team. It is also known for a conflict which lasted decades and tore a rift in the country's heart along ethnic lines. The primarily Tamil Northern province remains at arm length



from the government and capital, receiving less development and income from tourism. The North is heavily affected by economic crises, the hangover of displacement, and the deadly legacy of the conflict: landmines.

MAG's considerable presence in Sri Lanka's Northern Province for more than two decades offers a wide range of completed projects, including with Norwegian funding, that showcase the impact of MAG's work. But only in person can one understand the difference MAG has made in Sri Lanka.

For example in Maankulam, in Mullaitivu district – an area that was subject to heavy fighting during the Sri Lankan Civil War, due to its key strategic location between the Northern province and the capital Colombo – MAG's clearance work, under the Norwegian funding, was crucial to facilitate the safe construction of new hospital premises. It was while living in the attached accommodation that members of the hospital staff saw evidence of landmine contamination, with several mines visible at the surface of ground adjacent to the path

The new Maankulam Base Hospital – built on land cleared by MAG with Norwegian funding – provides life-saving support to the broader region.

June 2025

between the hospital and residence. The contamination was reported to the authorities, and MAG was tasked with the clearance of the entire property. The task was made significantly more complex by the thick vegetation in unused areas, the variety of explosive ordnance present (due to the use of the facility by both sides in the conflict), and the fact that the hospital remained in use during the clearance process. Despite these issues, the task was completed in good time, and the hospital staff particularly commended the sensitivity and professionalism of the MAG clearance personnel. While the old building had been used as a medical facility for the Sri Lankan government forces during the civil war, the new hospital (including accommodation for many of the medical staff working there) is now a medical hub for the surrounding area, serves the busy highway, and is the main provider of antivenom for the nearby villages: a life-saving treatment essential for the at-risk farming communities.

The impact of MAG's work in Sri Lanka is visible at every turn. A cafe along the route serves lunch consisting of rice and vegetables grown in land cleared by MAG, and the brother of one of the cafe's local staff works as a deminer for MAG. In the next village further down the road, Mister Lal Senavinatne – a former police officer, who had been displaced between 1985 and 2019 – has only recently returned to his childhood home after retiring from a long career. His land was used as a police station and occupied by both parties to the conflict at various times. Lal Senavinatne himself was wounded three times during the civil war and speaks of hundreds of comrades lost to mines and other items of explosive ordnance. The previous use of the land as a police facility lends itself to the presence of defensive minefields around it, laid in the irregular fashion common to this area. These were discovered by Lal upon his return, and following his report to the authorities, MAG was tasked to clear the land.

"My only fear now is to lose my coconut yield to wild elephants."

Lal Senavinatne, retired police officer in the Mankuulam area, Northern province



Beyond personally working his land, he now provides employment to several local people who assist in vegetation cutting and the cultivation of new crops. Coconuts are a traditional agricultural product in this region, grown in small to medium plots of land, and sold at the market. Their price has risen in recent years by over 100%, making cleared land more valuable and giving greater hope that clearance beneficiaries will be able to derive sustainable incomes from the land cleared and handed over to them.

With the support of the Norwegian government, MAG's work in Sri Lanka has not only reduced the threat posed by explosive ordnance and improved the local population's livelihoods, it has also significantly contributed to the progress towards Sri Lanka's clearance obligation under the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention (APMBC). However, the current Article 5 deadline may require Sri Lanka to submit a new extension request beyond 2028 due to newly discovered contaminated areas.

June 2025

Annex B

Complete overview of project goals, outcomes, outputs, and priority evaluation criteria per programme

Country	Goal	Outcomes	Outputs	Outcomes	Priority Criteria
Cambodia	To contribute to improved human security in north-eastern Cambodia through the release of safe land for productive agricultural use and infrastructure development, and through the provision of EORE.	Outcome 1: Measurable progress towards APMBC, CCM treaty compliance, and universalisation.	Output 1.1: Land released compliant to applicable standards.	What evidence is there of: ➤ Contributions to improved human security? ➤ Progress towards treaty compliance? ➤ Improved livelihoods and access to basic services? ➤ Risk of harm reduced? ➤ Increased awareness and knowledge of the risk from EO and of safer behaviour? ➤ Behaviour change?	Criteria 1 to 4, and, potentially, supplementary criterion 10 (conflict sensitivity)
		Outcome 2: Safe and productive land use improves livelihoods, access to basic services.	Output 2.1: Increased awareness and knowledge of the risk from EO and of safer behaviour.		
		Outcome 3: Risk of harm reduced through safer behaviour and clearance.			
Central Sahel (Burkina Faso, Mali, Niger)	To reduce the impact of IED threats on the population of the Central Sahel.	Outcome 1: National NGOs/CSOs capacity in context analysis EORE is enhanced.	Output 1.1: National NGOs/CSOs are identified and capacity built to conduct context analysis and deliver EORE.	What evidence is there of: ➤ Enhanced capacity in conducting context analysis and delivering EORE? ➤ Communities being (more) aware of the risks posed by EO and knowing safe behaviours? ➤ CFPs being able to deliver EORE key messages? ➤ Integration of EO-related risks into humanitarian workers field deployment planning?	Criteria 1 to 5
		Outcome 2: At-risk communities and unsafe behaviours are identified to tailor EORE approaches.	Output 2.1: Context analysis is conducted through community meetings and group discussions.		
		Outcome 3: Communities are aware of the risks posed by EO and know safe behaviours.	Output 3.1: EORE sessions are delivered to at-risk communities		
		Outcome 4: CFPs are able to deliver EORE key messages to their communities.	Output 4.1: CFPs are identified and trained in EORE.		
		Outcome 5: Hard-to-reach communities benefit from DEORE campaign and life-saving messages.	Output 5.1: DEORE campaigns are developed and disseminated.		
		Outcome 6: Humanitarian workers are aware of EO threat and integrate EO's related risks in their field deployment planning.	Output 6.1: EORE for humanitarian is delivered.		
		Outcome 7: Awareness and commitment towards APMBC treaty obligations is increased.	Output 7.1: Action plans and activities are identified		

Country	Goal	Outcomes	Outputs	Outcomes	Priority Criteria
Iraq	To facilitate the return of displaced populations, provide communities with access to safe land, and to protect vulnerable women, girls, boys, and men from the threat of EO in line with Article 5 of the Mine Ban Treaty.	Outcome 1: Measurable progress towards APMBC, CCM treaty compliance, and universalisation.	Output 1.1: Land surveyed and hazardous areas identified.	What evidence is there of: ➤ Facilitating return of displaced populations? ➤ Providing access to safe land? ➤ Protecting vulnerable women, girls, boys, and men from the threat of EO? ➤ Progress towards treaty compliance? ➤ Improved livelihoods and access to basic services? ➤ Risk of harm reduced? ➤ Increased awareness and knowledge of the risk from EO and of safer behaviour? ➤ Behaviour change?	Criteria 1 to 4 and 6, and, potentially, supplementary criterion 9 (conflict sensitivity)
		Outcome 2: Safe and productive land use improves livelihoods, access to basic services.	Output 1.2: Land released compliant to applicable standards.		
		Outcome 3: Risk of harm reduced through safer behaviour and clearance.	Output 1.3: Threat from EO removed. Output 2.1: Increased awareness and knowledge of the risk from EO and of safer behaviour.		
Laos	To support socio-economic development in communities affected by EO through defining and clearing cluster munition contamination in one of the poorest and most-explosive ordnance contaminated districts in Lao PDR.	Outcome 1: Measurable progress towards APMBC, CCM treaty compliance, and universalisation.	Output 1.1: Land released compliant to applicable land release standards.	What evidence is there of: ➤ Progress towards treaty compliance? ➤ Improved livelihoods and access to basic services?	Criteria 1 to 4 and, potentially, supplementary criterion 10 (environment)
		Outcome 2: Safe and productive land use improves livelihoods, access to basic services.	Output 1.2: Land surveyed and hazardous areas identified.		
Lebanon	To facilitate post-conflict recovery and development in impacted communities and support the Government of Lebanon to reach an impact-free country through the removal of cluster munitions in southern Lebanon and West Bekaa.	Outcome 1: Measurable progress towards APMBC, CCM treaty compliance, and universalisation.	Output 1.1: Land released compliant to applicable land release standards.	What evidence is there of: ➤ Facilitating post-conflict recovery (particularly in the context of new conflict)? ➤ Contributions to improved human security? ➤ Progress towards treaty compliance? ➤ Improved livelihoods and access to basic services? ➤ Freedom of movement? ➤ Risk of harm reduced? ➤ Behaviour change? ➤ Integration with HPSDE initiatives? ➤ Increased awareness and knowledge of the risk from EO and of safer behaviour? ➤ Enhanced capacity of national authorities	Criteria 1 to 6 and supplementary criterion 9 (conflict sensitivity)
		Outcome 2: Safe and productive land use improves livelihoods, access to basic services, and freedom of movement.	Output 2.1: Increased awareness and knowledge of the risk from EO and of safer behaviour.		
		Outcome 3: Risk of harm reduced through safer behaviour and clearance.	Output 3.1: Enhanced capacity of national authorities.		

Country	Goal	Outcomes	Outputs	Outcomes	Priority Criteria
Myanmar	Conflict-impacted communities in Chin State, Myanmar, are more aware of the risks and how to mitigate the impact of landmines and EO.	Outcome 1: Risk of harm reduced through safer behaviour and clearance.	Output 1.1: Men, women, boys, and girls at risk of death or injury are more aware of the threat of EO and have the understanding to mitigate risk. Output 1.2: Identification of possible contamination in and nearby conflict impacted village.	What evidence is there of: ➤ Risk of harm reduced through safer behaviour? ➤ Men, women, boys, and girls are more aware of the threat of EO and understand how to mitigate risk? ➤ The identification of possible contamination?	Criteria 1 to 4 and 6, supplementary criterion 9 (conflict sensitivity), and, potentially, supplementary criterion 8 (inclusion)
		Outcome 1: Measurable progress towards APMBC, CCM treaty compliance, and universalisation. Outcome 2: Safe and productive land use improves livelihoods, access to basic services. Outcome 3: Enhanced gender-responsive readiness of SHARP's workforces to transition from demining to alternative employment opportunities.	Output 1.1: Land released compliant to applicable land release standards. Output 2.1: Staff skill acquisition and livelihood transition activities implemented.	What evidence is there of: ➤ Facilitating return of displaced populations? ➤ Providing access to safe land? ➤ Protecting vulnerable women, girls, boys, and men from the threat of EO? ➤ Progress towards treaty compliance? ➤ Improved livelihoods, access to basic services? ➤ SHARP's enhanced gender-responsive readiness to transition from demining?	Criteria 1 to 6
Syria	To further contribute to mitigating the threat of EO and facilitating the safe return of the population and safe access to land in Northeast Syria (NES), through the removal and destruction of EO, while raising awareness about EO risks across NES.	Outcome 1: Measurable progress towards APMBC, CCM treaty compliance, and universalisation. Outcome 2: To reduce the risk of death or injury among the returnees, host community, IDPs, and humanitarian actors in NES, by increasing their awareness of the EO threat and providing training for teachers and Community Focal Points (CFPs), Outcome 3: Sustainable nationally-owned MA through improved governance and with increased local implementation.	Output 1.1: Land surveyed and hazardous areas identified. Output 1.2: Land released compliant to applicable land release standards. Output 1.3: Threat from EO removed. Output 2.1: Increased awareness and knowledge of the risk from EO and safer behaviour. Output 3.1: Increased coordination and collaboration with humanitarian, peace, stabilisation, development and environment actors.	What evidence is there of: ➤ Contributing to safe return and safe access? ➤ Progress towards treaty compliance? ➤ Reduced risk of death or injury among returnees, host community, IDPs, and humanitarian actors? ➤ Increased awareness of the EO threat? ➤ Improved governance and increased local implementation? ➤ Increased awareness and knowledge of the risk from EO and of safer behaviour? ➤ Integration with Humanitarian Peacebuilding Stability Development Environment (HSPDE) actors?	Criteria 1 to 4 and criterion 5 in the light of a whole-of-Syria approach in particular.

Country	Goal	Outcomes	Outputs	Outcomes	Priority Criteria
West Africa Guinea Bissau, Senegal, Mauritania	To develop sustainable national capacities in Guinea Bissau, Mauritania, and Senegal to meet treaty obligations and support transitioning to national ownership of Humanitarian MA.	Outcome 1: Enhance the capacity of national authorities to manage humanitarian action. Outcome 2: Enhance the information management systems, resources, and capacities of national authorities. Outcome 3: Support the integration of international MA standards and best practices into national MA standards and strategies. Outcome 4: Increase the collaboration and coordinated planning of MA initiatives.	Output 1.1: National authority's capacity and needs assessed with plans developed. Output 2.1: Information Management System and procedures reviewed and updated. Output 3.1: NMAS in line with IMAS and sector best practices. Output 4.1: MA Coordination mechanisms initiated (or established). Output 5.1: Hazardous areas (re)surveyed, EO reported, and removed.	What evidence is there of: ➤ Enhanced NMAA capacity to manage humanitarian action? ➤ Enhanced IM systems, resources, and capacities of NMAA? ➤ Integration of IMAS and best practice into national mine action standards and strategies? ➤ Increased collaboration and coordination of mine action?	Criteria 1 to 6
		Outcome 1: Measurable progress towards APMBC, CCM treaty compliance, and universalisation. Outcome 2: Safe and productive land use improves livelihoods, access to basic services. Outcome 3: Risk of harm reduced through safer behaviour and change.	Output 1.1: Land released according to applicable standards.	What evidence is there of: ➤ Progress towards treaty compliance? ➤ Improved livelihoods, access to basic services? ➤ Risk of harm reduced? ➤ Safer behaviour/behaviour change?	Criteria 1 to 3 and criterion 4 in the light of the integration with HPSDE actors in particular.

Primary evaluation criteria and questions

No.	Evaluation Criteria	Evaluation Questions
1	Relevance: Is the intervention doing the right things?	To what extent did targeting strategies, selection processes and project implementation approaches respond to the needs and priorities of different groups of people, particularly women and girls?
		To what extent are affected populations satisfied with the interventions?
		To what extent were projects adapted in response to the conditions in which they were delivered?
2	Coordination and Collaboration: To what extent is the intervention coherent and integrated?	To what extent were MAG and partner interventions coordinated with, or complementary to, those of other stakeholders within the mine action (MA) sector and in other sectors (e.g. humanitarian, development, peacebuilding, environment)?
3	Effectiveness: Is the intervention achieving its objectives?	To what extent did the programmes/projects, at an individual country level and taken as a whole, achieve the intended outcomes and output targets in relation to: ➤ Clearance of mine or cluster munitions and other explosive ordnance? ➤ Destruction of stockpiled mines, CM and other EO including dismantling production and storage facilities? ➤ Assistance to victims and their families, including rehabilitation and reintegration? ➤ Awareness-raising and education of local populations about the risks of mines, cluster munitions, and other EO?
		What evidence is there that the programmes/projects, at an individual country level and taken as a whole, contributed to: ➤ The promotion of security and reducing the risk of armed violence? ➤ Socio-economic development of affected communities? ➤ The capacity development of national and local MA organisations/authorities to address effectively mine/EO/IED-related concerns?
4	Efficiency: How well are resources being used?	To what extent did the programmes/projects deliver results that ensured good value for money?
		To what extent were programmes/projects delivered in a timely and successful manner, given the resources available?
		How were programmes/projects adapted to ensure that the programme achieved its intended results?
5	National ownership and sustainability: Have interventions promoted national ownership and is the change likely to last?	What evidence is there, if any, of increased national and local ownership of humanitarian MA goals, objectives, and activities?
		To what extent are the outcomes achieved likely to continue after the programmes/projects end?
6	Gender: How has the intervention affected and benefitted women and men differently?	How did the programmes/projects' outcomes affect women, girls, boys, and men differently?
		What evidence is there that actions taken by MAG have improved the participation of different groups, including women, girls, and any specific marginalised groups in operational delivery, in relation to: ➤ Participation or leadership in community decision-making? ➤ Participation or leadership in the MA sector? ➤ Participation or leadership within MAG or partner organisations?

Secondary evaluation criteria and questions (cross-cutting principles)

No.	Evaluation Criteria	Evaluation Questions
7	Diversity: How has the intervention affected and benefitted persons with diverse backgrounds?	Did the programmes/projects' staff represent a variety of cultures, ethnicities, religions, social classes and political views?
		Did the programmes/projects consider how different cultural, ethnic, religious, social, and political groups can be reached with the activities?
		Have different cultural, ethnic, religious, social, and political groups been considered in needs assessments and post-evaluations related to the implemented activities?
8	Inclusion: How does the intervention affect and benefit potentially excluded or marginalised groups, including former combatants and persons with disabilities?	How were persons such as former combatants or from oppressed groups considered and integrated into the programmes/projects' activities?
		Did the programmes/projects record persons with disabilities including explosive ordnance (EO) victims (disaggregated by gender and age) among the beneficiaries of explosive ordnance risk education (EORE) and other MA activities?
		Were any programmes/projects' activities specifically targeted at former combatants, oppressed groups or persons with disabilities including EO victims?
9	Conflict Sensitivity: How does the intervention consider and adapt to the needs of conflict-affected persons and communities?	Were the programmes/projects based on any MAG internal policies or training on conflict sensitivity?
		How was conflict sensitivity included in the programmes/projects' design and implementation phase?
		Did the programmes/projects incorporate trauma-informed practice into their MA activities?
10	Environment: How does the intervention consider environmental impact of, and environmental aspects relevant for the project?	Did the programmes/projects incorporate environmental considerations into SOPs and policies (e.g. for procurement)?
		Were environmental aspects considered in programmes/projects' implementation?
		Did programmes/projects consider actions to mitigate negative impacts from climate change, and environmental pollution?

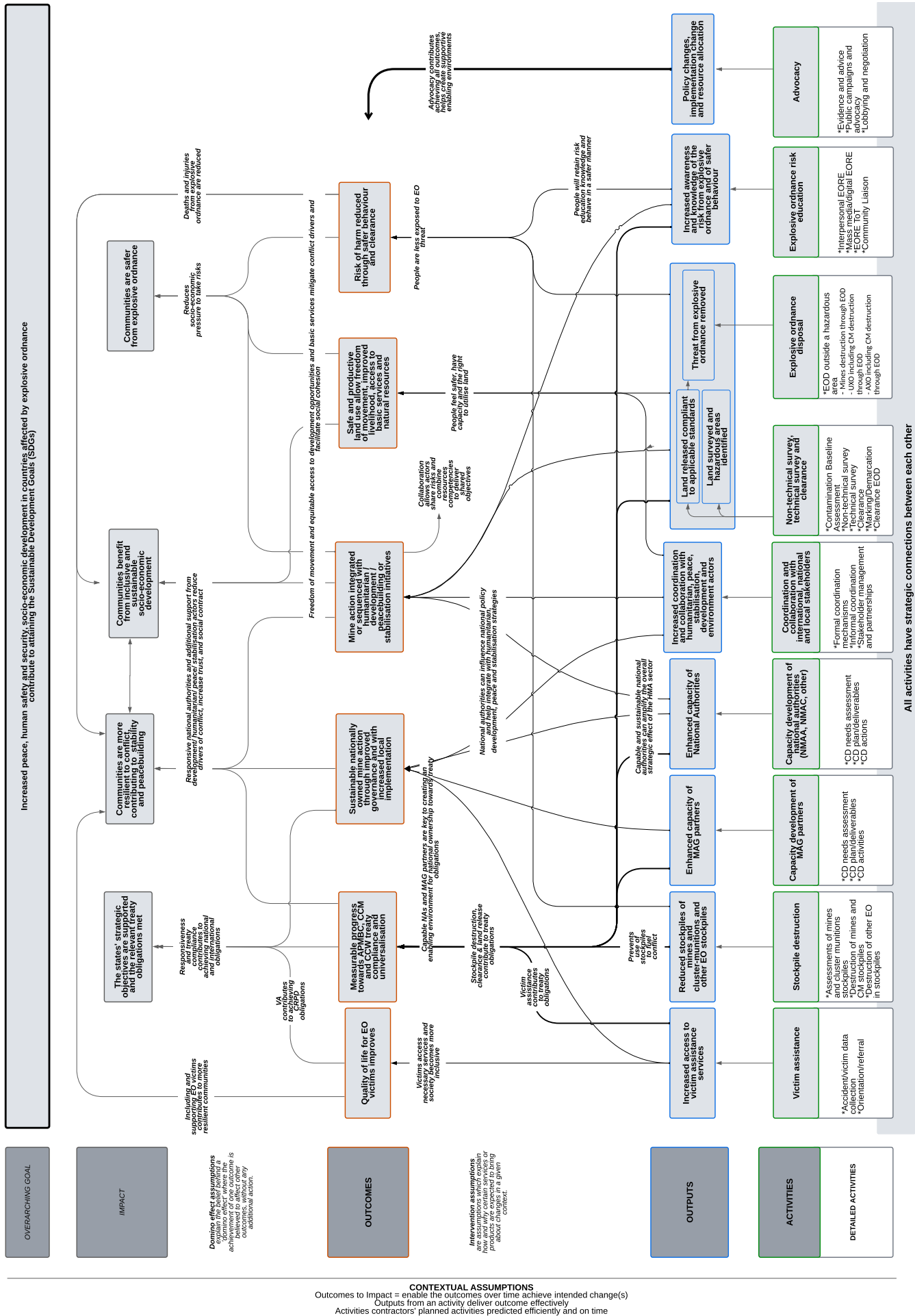
Annex C List of KILs conducted

Country	Organisation	Function / Position
Cambodia	MAG	Country Director
		Programme Officer
		MAPU Chief of Ratana Kiri province
Laos	MAG	Country Director
		Female EOD
Myanmar	MAG	Community Liaison Operations Manager
		Community Liaison Team Leader
		Community Liaison Officer
Sri Lanka	MAG	Coordinator
		Country Director
		Former Country Director
Central Sahel	MAG	Communications Coordinator
		Programme Manager
		Staff Transition Programme Manager
Iraq	MAG	Hospital Doctor
		Former Policeman, landowner
		Operations Manager
Lebanon	MAG	Regional Programmes Manager Central Sahel (Mali, Niger, Burkina Faso)
		Mine Action Advisor WA Region
		Programme Officer
Syria	MAG	Community Liaison Manager
		Security Advisor
		Security and Access
West Africa	MAG	Monitoring Evaluation Learning Specialist
		Director
		Head of Communications
Zimbabwe	MAG	Head of Communications
		MAG, Country Director
		MAG, Community Liaison Manager
Iraq	MAG	MAG, Technical Operation Manager
		SHO, Grants Manager
		SHO, Programme Officer
Lebanon	MAG	Programme Officer
		Country Director
		Technical Operations Manager
Syria	MAG	Head of Support Services
		former Mayor of Baalout village
		current Mayor of Baalout village
West Africa	MAG	Police man Mhaidseh village
		Mechanic, Mhaidseh village
		United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF)
Syria	MAG	Child Protection Officer
		DRC, Protection Officer
		DRC, Economic Recovery Team Leader
West Africa	MAG	DRC, Economic Recovery Team Leader
		No country director, über PM NES kontaktieren
		HI, Inclusion Technical Officer
Syria	MAG	Ashna, Operations Manager
		NESMAC Director
		NESMAC Co-Director
West Africa	MAG	MAG Mine Action Advisor WA Region
		MAG Regional Programmes Manager Western West Africa (Guinea Bissau, Senegal, Gambia, Mauritania)
		MAG Former TFM Guinea Bissau
West Africa	MAG	MAG Regional Community Liaison Manager
		Co-Director and Founder
		Consultant hired for report Senegal
West Africa	MAG	Director
		Programme National de Déminage Humanitaire pour le Développement (PNDHD) Mauritania
		Director
West Africa	MAG	Centre National d'Action Antimines au Sénégal (CNAMS)
		Director
		Chargée d'affaires a.i.
West Africa	MAG	Norway Embassy
		Country Director
		Armed Violence Reduction Specialist
West Africa	MAG	Coordonnatrice Bureau de terrain Casamance
		Représentante Résidente Adjointe
		Deputy Governor Casamance
West Africa	MAG	Radio Number 1
		Director
Zimbabwe	MAG	Country Director
		Regional Programme Support Manager East and Southern Africa
		CEO

List of FGDs conducted

Country	Organisation	Function / Position
Global	MAG	Head of Programmes Performance & Learning Unit
		Senior Community Liaison Advisor
		Partnership Manager (Norwegian grant)
		Director of Programmes
		Programmes Quality Director
Regional	MAG	Head Strategic Partnerships, Govt Relations
		Regional Manager Asia Pacific Region
		Regional Director East and Southern Africa region
		Regional Programme Support Manager East and Southern Africa
		Regional Programme Support Manager for the Middle East region
Lebanon	MAG	CL teams: 11 participants (5 women / 6 men)
	MAG	Clearance teams: 6 participants (3 women / 3 men)
	Beneficiaries	Arab Salim: 9 participants (5 women / 4 men)
	LMAC	Head of Operations
		Media and EORE Section Head
		Director
		Head of Security
	Terre des Hommes (TdH)	Senior Child Protection Officer
		Head of Office
		Protection Manager
		Protection Manager
	Amel	GBV Officer
		Facilitator
		Facilitator
		Facilitator
		CP Field Coordinator
Iraq	MAG female employees	Social worker
		Deminer
		Community Liaison Officer
		Logistics Officer
		HR Coordinator
Sri Lanka	MAG female deminers	10 deminers
	Beneficiaries	Healthcare Workers (3 women / 1 men)
	Beneficiaries	Villagers (3 women / 6 men)
West Africa	Beneficiaries	Villagers Kiandiadu (7 women / 18 men)
	Beneficiaries	Villagers Dialankine (female group, 9 women)
	Beneficiaries	Villagers Katouré (1 women / 4 men)

Annex D MAG's Humanitarian Mine Action Theory of Change



Notes

- 1 In September 2024, the responsibility for the grants under Norway's HMA programme were transferred from the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs (NMFA) to the Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation (Norad). This report therefore refers to the grant as "Norwegian funding" or "Norwegian grant".
- 2 Full and substantial gender equality is the guiding principle and the goal to achieve, whereby gender equity is a tool and a means to reach full and substantial equality. MAG, "Gender Lexicon", 2024, p. 4; and MAG, "Gender Position Paper", 2024, p. 2.
- 3 The EO definition as per International Mine Action Standards (IMAS) includes mines, while the definition in Protocol V of the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW) does not. See: IMAS, "04.10 Glossary of mine action terms, definitions and abbreviations," 1 August 2003, 2nd edition, amendment 12 October 2024; and CCW, "Protocol on Explosive Remnants of War," Protocol V, undated.
- 4 IMAS, "14.10 Guide for the Evaluation of MA Interventions," 1 August 2007, 1st edition; June 2013, amendment 3; International Organization for Standardization (ISO), "ISO 9001 Procedure 9.1.3 on Analysis & Evaluation," 2015, 5th edition; and Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development's Development Assistance Committee (OECD DAC), "Applying Evaluation Criteria Thoughtfully," 15 March 2022.
- 5 The likelihood of achieving or underachieving the measurable targets set as of the end of the Norwegian project (where it is still ongoing) was calculated by the evaluation team based on the achievements made between the project start until the end of May 2025. The predictions were discussed and agreed with the concerned programmes.
- 6 The report of Rebecca Roberts, "Final Evaluation of MACM II Mines Advisory Group," January 2025, p. 22, suggests that this may be due to a lack of follow-up clearance capacity, leaving those who had benefitted from EORE without real long-term means of recourse.
- 7 Also demonstrating a clearly measurable achievement towards Norway's regional strategy. See NMFA, "Strategy for Norway's efforts in the Sahel region (2024–2030)," 27 January 2025.
- 8 APMBC Burkina Faso Mine Ban Treaty Article 5 deadline extension request, 30 April 2025.
- 9 See for example: Max Euclide Kanfany, "Crise au CNAMS de Ziguinchor: Le programme de déminage en Casamance en eau trouble," Seneweb, 16 July 2025.
- 10 As of the end of May 2025, the Lebanon Mine Action Center (LMAC) knew of 13 casualties caused by EO other than from attacks during the new conflict. In comparison, in 2006, over 100 casualties were reported within two

- weeks of the emerged conflict. Source: FGD with LMAC held on 21 May 2025.
- 11 Rebecca Roberts, "Final Evaluation of MACM II Mines Advisory Group," January 2025, p. 22.
- 12 See for example: The World Bank, "Resilient and Low Carbon Agriculture in Lao PDR – Priorities for a Green Transition," 30 June 2023, p. 7, and "Cassava Profits Conceal Alarming Environmental Threat in Laos," The Lao Times, 17 July 2023.
- 13 MAG and IMPACT Initiatives, "Advancing the understanding of the relationship between Mine Action, Land Use Change, Environment and Climate – Cambodia Pilot Study," May 2025.
- 14 See for example: Info et société, "Liban : après la guerre, le déminage," TV news report, Arte TV (Lebanon), 2024.
- 15 The sample size accounted for 3% of all direct beneficiaries reported for Norway-funded legacy contamination clearance tasks.
- 16 Statement of Sri Lanka, APMBC intersessional meetings, Geneva, 19 June 2025, p.13.
- 17 While in 2010, 254km² were suspected or confirmed hazardous areas, by 2021, Sri Lanka had reduced the contamination to less than 12km². However, as of the end of 2024, the extent had increased again to 23km² following the discovery of more contaminated areas, with the "completion survey" still ongoing. With an average of 6.3km² land released per between 2020 – 2024, but contamination still growing, current clearance obligations by 1 June 2028 can most likely only be fulfilled, if additional clearance capacity is available. Statement of Sri Lanka, APMBC intersessional meetings, Geneva, 19 June 2025, pp. 13 and 15; International Campaign to Ban Landmines (ICBL), "Landmine Monitor 2024," November 2024, p. 69.
- 18 Since 2010, casualties dropped from an average of more than 30 per year between 2010 and 2014 to an average of six annually between 2015 and 2019 to less than an average of five per year between 2020 and 2024. Sri Lanka APMBC Article 7 Report (for calendar year 2024), Form H, p. 11.
- 19 IOM, "Total number of internally displaced persons (IDPs) due to conflict and violence as of Dec 2024," 13 May 2025.
- 20 The finding highlights the importance of allowing the time to better understand the specific country contexts when developing a new regional and new HMA country programmes and proposing relevant projects to donors. Only following the effective start of operations on the ground, it may be possible to identify appropriate measurable targets, suggesting that new projects should include an "initiation phase" followed by any adjustments if and as required.
- 21 Although some EORE activities in Guinea-Bissau

seem to have undermined resilience of communities, see also Page 22.

22 In the area of the size of a football pitch (around 7,140m²) MAG found an average of 95 items of EO during clearance operations. For comparison: In Iraq, MAG finds an average of 13 items of EO in the same area size. Please note: This rough comparison lacks an in-depth analysis of all relevant factors and aims to demonstrate only that Guinea-Bissau has a significant problem with EO contamination – as serious as (if not worse) than countries for which the large extent of contamination is commonly known.

23 In Guinea-Bissau, while MAG, the HALO Trust and the national MA organisation HUMAID are accredited to conduct clearance, no clearance activities have taken place since MAG closed the project. In Mauritania, HAMAP-Humanitaire, the only humanitarian MA organisation conducting clearance, closed operations in 2024 due to a lack of funding. In Senegal, the only international MA operator conducting clearance is HI, whereby the current project funded by the European Union (EO) ends as of the end of 2025.

24 The NMAA in Guinea-Bissau is the National Council for Humanitarian Demining (Concelho Nacional de Desminagem Humánitaria, CNDH), in Senegal, the responsibility is with the Senegalese National Mine Action Centre (Centre National d'Action Antimine au Sénégal, CNAMS). See also Note 4.

25 Ratanakiri only has minor mine contamination compared to other provinces. For reference see: **Cambodia APMBC Article 7 Report** (for calendar year 2024), Form F, pp. 4 and 5.

26 The **Safe Path Forward III** is linked to the Lao PDR's **"Ninth Five-Year National Socio-Economic Development Plan (2021–2025),"** In 2024, MA operators cleared 70km² of agricultural and 5km² of "development" land. See **Lao PDR CCM Article 7 Report** (for calendar year 2024), Form F, pp. 17–19.

27 Hannah Wild, Aparna Cheran, Abby Willging, Christelle Loupforest, Sebastian Kasack, Tim Gargan, Barclay Stewart, International Blast Injury Research Network, and Adam L. Kushner, **"The Explosive Weapons Trauma Care Collective (EXTRACCT): A Roadmap for Reducing preventable Death among Civilian Casualties of Explosive Injury,"** The Journal of Conventional Weapons Destruction, Issue 28.3, Fall 2024, pp. 28 – 34.

28 **Burkina Faso APMBC Article 7 Report** (for calendar year 2023), p. 3; **Presentation of Mali, Regional Conference on Addressing the Humanitarian Impact of Improvised Anti-Personnel Mines within the Framework of the Convention**, 13 February 2024; and **Mali Mine Ban Treaty Article 7 Report** (for May 2023 to May 2024), Form C, p. 7.

29 For identified challenges and recommendations see: MAG, **"Evaluation of MAG's Mine Action Responses in Sinjar and Tel Afar district, Ninewa Governorate,**

Republic of Iraq – Impact, Challenges and Best Practices," August 2024, pp. 18 – 22. For further evidence of improved performance see: Rebecca Roberts, **"Final Evaluation of MACM II,"** January 2025, pp. 20 and 21.

30 For detailed findings see: MAG, **"Evaluation of MAG's Mine Action Responses in Sinjar and Tel Afar district, Ninewa Governorate, Republic of Iraq – Impact, Challenges and Best Practices,"** August 2024, p. 20.

31 MAG's area of operations under the Norwegian funding does not include cluster munition contaminated areas. See also MAG, **"Evaluation of MAG's Mine Action Responses in Sinjar and Tel Afar district, Ninewa Governorate, Republic of Iraq – Impact, Challenges and Best Practices,"** August 2024, p. 14.

32 MAG internal calculations for example, suggest that the remaining known hazardous areas (not including any clearance of buildings, which require a different calculation) in Ninewa governorate which are open to be addressed by humanitarian MA operators could be cleared in three years with the resources MAG obtained in 2024.

33 International Campaign to Ban Landmines (ICBL), **"Landmine Monitor 2024,"** November 2024, p. 43.

34 United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), **"Myanmar situation,"** undated, p. 1; Earthquakelist.org, **"Myanmar Earthquake Report,"** undated; and Helen Regan, **"Middle class wiped out: Half of Myanmar's people forced into poverty by civil war, UN report finds,"** CNN World, 12 April 2024.

35 See also: Rebecca Roberts, **"Final Evaluation of MACM II,"** January 2025, pp. 18, 19, and 36.

36 MAG is now working on so-called "ploughshare" and "reinforced ploughshare" minefields which take their name from locally produced Zimbabwean mines that utilise directional fragmentation and are generally tripwire activated. They are usually placed in three or – for reinforced ploughshare minefields – in six rows, with pressure-activated anti-personnel mines laid around them. Both types of minefields are generally standardised at a width of 400 meters, meaning the reinforced ploughshare has a much higher density, increasing time required to clear them. However, the reinforced ploughshare minefields MAG is currently working in were found to have a larger distance than expected between mine rows, leading to more land to be reduced rather than cleared.

37 **Zimbabwe APMBC Sixth Article 5 deadline extension request**, 1 April 2025.

38 For rubble removal see also: MAG, **"Evaluation of MAG's Mine Action Responses in Sinjar and Tel Afar district, Ninewa Governorate, Republic of Iraq – Impact, Challenges and Best Practices,"** August 2024, pp. 9 and 33; and MAG, **"Lessons Learned from Iraq and Syria Debris Management and Rubble Clearance,"** April 2025.

39 The five pillars of MA are: Land release, EORE, victim assistance, advocacy, and stockpile destruction. See also: Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining (GICHD), **"A Guide to International Mine Action Standards,"** Edition 2010, October 2009, p. 9.

40 While the Norwegian project is in fact long compared to projects implemented under other grants, the length – in the perception of the NMAAs – was short. However the "short" implementation period is predominantly a result of the NMAA's time-consuming processes related to getting MoUs signed, accreditation applications processed, and task orders issued.

41 See for example: Radio Télévision Sénégalaise, **"Le Gouvernement renforce le Déminage en Casamance pour accompagner le retour des Déplacés,"** 22 July 2025.

42 MAG and IMPACT Initiatives, **"Advancing the understanding of the relationship between Mine Action, Land Use Change, Environment and Climate – Cambodia Pilot Study,"** May 2025.

43 For detailed findings see: MAG, **"Evaluation of MAG's Mine Action Responses in Sinjar and Tel Afar district, Ninewa Governorate, Republic of Iraq – Impact, Challenges and Best Practices,"** August 2024, pp. 29, 30 and 33.

44 Although MAG's headquarters are in Erbil, it maintains an office in Baghdad to ease coordination with the DMA and the government more generally. Management staff travel forth and back as deemed necessary to fulfil their duty.

45 For more information, see: MAG, **"Evaluation of MAG's Mine Action Responses in Sinjar and Tel Afar district, Ninewa Governorate, Republic of Iraq – Impact, Challenges and Best Practices,"** August 2024, pp. 19 and 20.

46 There is currently only one national MA operator in NES, which is already collaborating with another international MA operator. While this is not a hindrance, to avoid overlaps, MAG planned to work with the same national operator in a different geographical area. However, this was not approved by NESMAC.

47 Dual purpose cluster munitions: A type of cluster munitions that can be used against both "soft targets" (human beings) and "hard targets" (materials and structures including armoured ones).

48 APMBC, Committee on Article 5 Implementation, **"Preliminary Observations on the Implementation of Article 5 by Sri Lanka,"** Intersessional Meetings 17 – 20 June 2025, p. 1.; and **Sri Lanka APMBC Article 7 Report** (for calendar year 2024), pp. 6–7.

49 Nevertheless, at the same time, a significant amount of apparently previously unknown contaminated areas are identified during the completion survey. Sri Lanka may therefore submit its first APMBC clearance deadline extension request beyond 2030. See: **Statement of Sri Lanka**, APMBC intersessional meetings, Geneva, 19 June 2025, pp. 13 and 15.

50 It is important to note that throughout the project implementation, MAG had – with the exception of a three months period – a project manager and a Technical Field Manager (TFM) continuously based in country, while the programme director was traveling to Guinea-Bissau on a regular basis (every six weeks) too.

51 MAG **"Cluster Munitions Remnants Survey Dogs – Joint MAG APOPO Trial in Cambodia (2022–2023): Report on Lessons Learned,"** August 2024.

52 The project is a collaboration between the Ministry of Home Affairs (MoHA) and the UNDP, in partnership with the US Agency for International Development (USAID) and Irish Aid. UNDP, **"The LEAP Project Launch: Transforming Public Service Delivery in Lao PDR,"** 16 December 2024.

53 Iraq's cost analysis has shown that several smaller Multi-Task Teams (MTTs) are more expensive than fewer bigger teams, and also less resilient as they are not functional, if one team member is not available (e.g., because she or he is on sick leave). Iraq has therefore abandoned the idea of the MTTs which initially, among other reasons, were established to increase cost-effectiveness.

54 **Burkina Faso APMBC Article 7 Report** (for calendar year 2023), p. 3; **Burkina Faso Mine Ban Treaty First Article 5 deadline extension request**, 30 April 2025; and **Mali Mine Ban Treaty Article 7 Report** (for May 2023 to May 2024), Form C, p. 7.

55 Under different circumstances, such engagement could be criticised as not being sustainable but is assessed to have been justified in this case, as the key personnel in the NMAA has not changed over the past few years, and is not expected to change anytime soon.

56 This is certainly a finding very particular to Lebanon and has to be seen in the light of the current economic situation in the country with very limited employment opportunities.

57 See also: Rebecca Roberts, **"Final Evaluation of MACM II Mines Advisory Group,"** January 2025, pp. 39–40.

58 Chin state covers an area of 36,019km² – similar to the area size of Nordland or Vestland county in Norway.

59 See also: Rebecca Roberts, **"Final Evaluation of MACM II Mines Advisory Group,"** January 2025, pp. 39–40.

60 MAG, **"MAG's innovation in risk education,"** 17 September 2017; and MAG, **"Facebook Explosive Ordnance Risk Education Pilot,"** undated.

61 MAG, although already using the Group Question Sets of the Washington Group on Disability Statistics, (see **"Question Sets,"** undated) in some data collection forms may want to consider using it more broadly as an established standard.

62 International Alert, **"MAG Iraq Conflict Sensitivity Assessment – Final Report,"** 31 July 2024; and Fight for Humanity, **"Without Demining, there is no peace – MAG Mine Action Development in Senegal Peace and**

Conflict Analysis,” 30 January 2023.

63 See also: Rebecca Roberts, **“Final Evaluation of MACM II Mines Advisory Group,”** January 2025, p. 42.

64 Norad, for examples, defines conflict sensitivity as the understanding that any development, humanitarian or peace intervention, regardless of context, can potentially influence national, local and regional/cross-border dynamics, in either a negative or positive manner. Norad, **“Enhancing conflict sensitivity within the Norwegian Aid Administration,”** April 2024, p. 3. MAG internally, conflict sensitivity is defined as “acting with the understanding that any intervention and project will interact with the peace and conflict context and that such interaction may have positive or negative effects. It is a deliberate, continual and systematic approach to ensuring we understand and minimise negative effects (risks) and maximise positive effects (opportunities) of our actions.”

65 See also: Rebecca Roberts, **“Final Evaluation of MACM II Mines Advisory Group,”** January 2025, pp. 41–44

66 NPA and The Conflict and Environment Observatory (CEOBS), **“Green Field Tool User Guidance,”** 2025.

67 Scope 1 emissions: Direct emissions from sources

MAG can control directly, e.g., the fuel burned in generators and vehicles.

Scope 2 emissions: Emissions from purchased energy such as from electricity or for heating and cooling systems. Even though the emissions are related to the relevant power plants producing the energy, they are linked to MAG’s operations. Scope 3 emissions: Indirect value chain emissions. These are all emissions connected to MAG’s work but not under MAG’s direct control such as e.g. staff travel on commercial flights, goods and services purchased or the transport of supplies. See also: Climate Impact Partners, **“Scope 1, 2, and 3 Emissions explained,”** 12 September 2024.

68 United Nations Climate Change, **“The Paris Agreement,”** undated.

69 MAG and IMPACT Initiatives, **“Advancing the understanding of the relationship between Mine Action, Land Use Change, Environment and Climate – Cambodia Pilot Study,”** May 2025.

70 This action is proposed to reduce the time the donor has to spend to gain a comprehensive overview of the project activities but has of course to be discussed with the donor to confirm that this represents its preferences.





 **Norway**



RISKey GmbH | August 2025