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Sida Decentralised Evaluation

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Review of the DDG Humanitarian Mine Action Support to the National Strategy through Clearance and Enhanced Quality Project in Afghanistan (October 2010 – September 2013)

Final Report

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The views and interpretations expressed in this report are the authors' and do not necessarily reflect those of the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency, Sida.

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Abbreviations and Acronyms

AMAC	Area Mine Action Centers
AP	Anti-Personnel Mine
AT	Anti-Tank Mine
AVR	Armed Violence Reduction
BSC	Balanced Score Cards
DDG	Danish Demining Group
DFID	Department for International Development
DMC	Department of Mine Clearance
DRC	Danish Refugee Council
ERW	Explosive Remnants of War
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
GICHD	Geneva International Centre for Demining
HAF	Humanitarian Accountability Framework
HQ	Headquarters
MACCA	UN Mine Action Coordinating Committee for Afghanistan
MAPA	Mine Action Programme for Afghanistan
MFA	Ministry for Foreign Affairs (Sweden)
MRE	Mine Risk Education
MSEK	Swedish Krona (millions)
NGO	Non-Government Organisation
SEK	Swedish Krona
Sida	Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency
UN	United Nations
UNMAS	United Nations Mine Action Service
UXO	Unexploded Ordnance
VTF	Voluntary Trust Funds

Preface

Sida's Department for Conflict and Post-Conflict Cooperation commissioned Indevelop to carry out this evaluation through Sida's framework agreement for reviews and evaluations. The evaluated project is implemented by the Danish Demining Group (DDG) in Afghanistan.

Indevelop carried out the evaluation between April – July 2013. Jessica Rothman was the Project Manager, with overall responsibility for managing the implementation of the evaluation, and Ian Christoplos provided quality assurance for the reports.

The independent evaluation team included the following key members:

- Mr. Jock Baker, Team Leader: Jock is a member of Indevelop's Core Team of professional evaluators. He has previously worked with UN and NGO humanitarian agencies and has led evaluations and studies on various themes, such as: humanitarian reform, climate change adaptation, post-conflict recovery, gender equality programming, disaster risk reduction and humanitarian financing.
- Mr. Mark Buswell, Mine Action Specialist: Mark has many decades of mine action experience from working for humanitarian agencies and private contractors in different countries around the world, including Afghanistan.
- [name protected], National Consultant: before becoming a consultant, [name protected] worked for a number of years with the Afghanistan Research and Evaluation Unit on gender issues and the carrying out of community surveys.
- [name protected], National Consultant: [name protected] has extensive experience working at a senior level in provincial level planning and governance projects in various UN agencies and World Bank projects.

A draft report was circulated to Sida and DDG for comments, which have been addressed in this final report.

Acknowledgements

The evaluation team wishes to express our appreciation for the support and involvement of all those staff from the Danish Demining Group (DDG), the Mine Action Coordinating Committee for Afghanistan (MACCA) and Sida (both in Afghanistan and in Stockholm) who supported our team throughout the process. We particularly appreciated the constructive and open dialogue with those we met in Afghanistan – the desire for learning and continuous improvement is part of a strong culture within DDG and we benefited from this.

The DDG Programme Manager and his team at DDG Afghanistan facilitated the evaluation process at every stage by allocating staff time, organising transport, accommodation, administrative support, office space and visits to task sites. The evaluation team would like to express our sincere appreciation to all those who helped organise and/or support this evaluation in a challenging operational context.

Executive Summary

Afghanistan is one of the most heavily mined countries in the world. Mines were used extensively by both Soviet forces and the Mujahideen during the 10-year Soviet occupation in the 1980s, again during the conflict between the Najibullah regime and Mujahideen groups, and, more recently, by the Taliban and the Northern Alliance. DDG has operated in Afghanistan since 1999 and is currently one of two international implementing partners of the Mine Action Programme of Afghanistan (MAPA). Thanks to demining efforts by the Danish Demining Group (DDG) and its peers, the 1,861 km² of minefields and battle areas that were recorded in 1989 had been reduced by over 70%, including the majority of populated areas. Mine clearance, along with Mine Risk Education (MRE), has contributed to a 75% decrease in civilian victims over the past decade. As most of the major populated areas have been cleared, the operating environment for mine action agencies in Afghanistan has changed. Most of the hazards that remain to be cleared are either in remote areas or in hilly or mountainous areas, which may or may not be located near communities.

The goal of the evaluated three-year project, supported by Sida (hereafter referred to as “the project”), is to assist the Government of Afghanistan and the Mine Action Coordinating Committee for Afghanistan (MACCA) in achieving the aims of the Afghanistan Compact and comply with the Ottawa Convention. The project targets mine-affected populations in the Central and Northern regions of Afghanistan to clear 1,495,000 m² of contaminated land, provides Mines Risk Education and builds the capacities of DDG national staff.

This evaluation took place less than six months before the end of the project and thus offered the opportunity to carry out a “stock-take”, based on OECD/DAC criteria to assess progress, highlight lessons learned, and provide recommendations to DDG and Sida to help determine the course of future cooperation and assess the extent to which gender had been mainstreamed into the programme’s implementation and had contributed to gender equality. Due to the limited scope of this evaluation, much of the data that was used was extracted from existing DDG and MACCA databases, while using the 8-day field visit to Afghanistan to assess data consistency and accuracy as much as was possible.

Main Achievements

- DDG has reported a total of 21,650,795 m² cleared in all their projects between early 2010 and April 2013, of which 2,066,540 m² were cleared under the project in Balkh and Samangan Provinces in northern Afghanistan. This exceeds DDG’s original target by 38%, which can be attributed to a combination of the redeployment of teams from other projects after they came to an end and large areas of battle area clearance, which helped to improve

square meter coverage and balanced out some of the slower tasks in remote and mountainous areas.

- DDG has prioritised the staff training component of their programme in Afghanistan, not only to realise potential cost-efficiency gains, but also as a means to build the skills of national staff in both mine action and in the broader workplace outside of mine action. Between October 2010 and March 2013, a total of 3,667 courses were completed by participants, of which 2,388 were related to mine action skill building and 1,279 were general capacity building (English language training, computer skills, etc.).
- The evaluation found DDG's activities to be relevant to government and MACCA mine action priorities, while noting that interviews with provincial officials indicated that a reduced priority is being accorded to mine action, as most populated areas have been cleared and the number of mine victims has declined. DDG's activities have also supported Sweden's own priorities in terms of its mine clearance operations and training activities for national staff.
- The effectiveness of DDG interventions compares favourably with its peers. Despite considerable challenges posed by socio-cultural factors in Afghanistan, DDG has made progress with their gender approach, notably in the collection of disaggregated qualitative and quantitative data to track different impacts on men and women.
- At a community level, DDG's impact monitoring has been carried out by gender-balanced Mine Risk Education teams and demonstrates consistently high levels of satisfaction amongst beneficiary communities in terms of the clearance of areas from hazards and rendering them safe for human activities. The most recent DDG impact measurement data for project areas is from assessments that were carried out during 2011, which captured perspectives from 169 women and 156 male respondents in the 18-65 age group from households that were randomly selected in three communities. During the baseline survey, 35% of respondents felt that mines and UXOs posed a direct threat and 40% said that mines limited grazing and agricultural activities. Impact measurement, which was carried out after operations had been completed, found that 100% of respondents no longer worried about threats from mines, and improved food consumption was viewed as the main outcome of clearance.
- Since DDG impact measurement has been assessing changes to livelihoods in addition to mine safety, cases are often found where there are limits to land productivity that are not related to mines. DDG has so far collaborated with the Danish Refugee Council (DRC) on two pilot follow-up activities to improve the use of land that has been released through borehole construction and other water management infrastructure to provide irrigation for agriculture.
- DDG impact monitoring, complemented by MACCA's external post-intervention monitoring, has confirmed that areas had been successfully cleared and communities have put land back into production, thus providing a sustainable contribution to achieving the aims of the Afghanistan Compact and compliance with the Ottawa Convention.

Areas for Improvement

- Findings from this evaluation indicate that cost-effectiveness is an area that DDG will need to address as a priority in order to be competitive in a changing operating environment in Afghanistan. One of the major contributing factors is the relatively high costs of international staff. DDG is taking steps to reduce costs by, for example, reducing its overhead costs by sharing facilities with DRC and nationalising positions. Reduced efficiency, along with a substantially reduced donor base in comparison to previous years, raises questions regarding the institutional sustainability of DDG's current business model in Afghanistan.
- DDG has made considerable progress in measuring the impact of its interventions, but could make better use of generated data through improved analysis and the communication of results, both internally and to key external stakeholders.
- While the quality of the training that has been provided by DDG to their national staff was judged to be of good quality, the sustainability of training activities proved difficult to gauge because DDG only carries out post-intervention monitoring of their mine action operations, and does not do so for their training programmes.

Priority Conclusions and Recommendations

DDG is well placed to utilise impact measurement approaches to develop more proactive and targeted approach prioritisation and facilitate the engagement of development actors and their donors. With better analysis and use of impact measurement data and strategic links with development actors, DDG's task selection could be more strategic and add value, not only through improving the impact and sustainability of its interventions, but also to help improve cost effectiveness.

Since DDG will face increasing challenges in purely competing on a cost basis with peers, the priority recommendation is for DDG to identify a niche where it can add the most value and develop a revised strategy and funding base that would allow DDG to be better positioned to advocate for selected tasks that maximise impact while increasing cost-efficiency. Based on the findings of this evaluation, a potential niche could be the link with development and take the form of a partnership with DRC or another like-minded agency that is implementing recovery projects. Sida (and Danida) could play an important facilitation role in this respect.

Such a link with recovery and development activities would, institutionally, be most logical via a partnership with DRC. However, DRC's current operation in Afghanistan does not overlap, either geographically or programmatically, with DDG's current programme. If DDG decides to position itself in a development niche, it will require either significantly more programmatic alignment between DRC or DDG, or DDG will need to find an alternative partner to work on recovery programming in areas where they are working. Some NGOs have already started working in some of the communities where DDG has completed tasks and their links

with mine action agencies seem to be quite weak. Mine action agencies are obliged to invest time and resources in building trust with communities and it would seem logical that these investments could be put to better use to improve impact and sustainability by facilitating follow-on interventions and making more use of impact measurement results. For remote communities in particular, development actors are likely to face challenges in allocating sufficient resources to building relationships at a community level by themselves.

Other areas that merit attention from DDG are promoting greater awareness amongst DDG staff regarding gender approaches and DDG Afghanistan's Humanitarian Accountability Framework (HAF). Post-intervention monitoring should also be applied to staff training.

A recommendation that is directed specifically at Sida is to continue their current practice of making regular monitoring visits to Afghanistan, but that these should be joint visits with concerned DDG HQ staff and timed to coincide with the annual project review.

1 Introduction and Background

Afghanistan is one of the most heavily mined countries in the world. Mines were used extensively both by Soviet forces and the Mujahideen during the 10-year Soviet occupation, starting from 1979. Further mine-laying was carried out by the communist regime of Najibullah during localised internecine fighting between Mujahideen groups and is being continued by the Taliban and the Northern Alliance. Armed groups laid landmines to protect their main supply routes, airfields, military posts around key towns, gun positions, and front lines. The dynamics of the conflict have meant that different factions have frequently mined the same areas at different times.

According to the Mine Action Programme for Afghanistan (MAPA) records¹, a total of some 552 km² of contaminated areas remained in the first quarter of 2013, out of a total of 1,861 km² recorded in 1989. Over 70% of minefields and battle areas have thus been cleared, including virtually all populated areas. Mine clearance, along with Mine Risk Education (MRE), has contributed to a decrease in civilian victims. During the first quarter of 2013, 140 Afghans were killed or injured by mines and Explosive Remnants of War (ERW), down 75% from a quarterly average of 507 casualties recorded in 2001².

1.1 PURPOSE, SCOPE, RATIONALE, TARGET AUDIENCE AND EXPECTED USE OF THIS EVALUATION

This evaluation is taking place less than six months before the project in Afghanistan draws to a close and offers the opportunity to carry out a “stock-take” to:

- Assess progress and achievements against project objectives,
- Highlight lessons learned, and
- Provide recommendations to DDG and Sida to help determine the course of future cooperation.

¹ MAPA (2013) Fast Facts: 4th Quarter 1391/January to March 2013

² *ibid*

This evaluation was based on the OECD/DAC criteria to measure relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact and sustainability. The evaluation also assesses how specific cross-cutting issues – notably gender, poverty and conflict sensitivity – have been incorporated into various stages of the project cycle.

1.2 BACKGROUND TO THE PROJECT

1.2.1 The Danish Demining Group (DDG)

The Danish Demining Group is a Humanitarian Mine Action and Armed Violence Reduction (AVR) Unit within the Danish Refugee Council (DRC) that works worldwide to help and protect refugees, internally displaced and other conflict-affected persons. DDG's mission is to recreate a safe environment where people can live without the threat of landmines, Unexploded Ordnance (UXO), and small arms and light weapons through Humanitarian Mine Action activities, by focusing on landmines and explosive remnants of war, as well as Armed Violence Reduction programmes that address both physical and mental aspects of the threat that small arms and explosive remnants of war pose to the recreation of a safe environment as a starting point for development. DDG operates with three strategic objectives that define the fundamental and specific aims of their operations:

- Enhance Human Security by clearing landmines and unexploded ordnance, reducing the threat from small arms & light weapons and providing risk education and raising awareness
- Provide impact-oriented, cost-effective and innovative solutions in close cooperation with relevant stakeholders
- Support local structures and institutions in finding sustainable solutions to residual problems in a manner that enables economic and social development

The merger between DRC and DDG at a global level in 2007 was done with the aim of simultaneously delivering effective mine action and Armed Violence Reduction through DDG, and also fulfilling its mandate in relation to Internally Displaced People (IDPs) and refugees.

1.2.2 DDG in Afghanistan

DDG has operated in Afghanistan since 1999, initially with two clearance teams in Kandahar and expanded operations to other areas. As of 2012, DDG has recovered and disposed over 33,000 landmines and 1.3 million unexploded ordinances.³

³ <http://www.danishdemininggroup.dk/about-danish-demining-group/where-we-work/afghanistan>

Each year DDG and other implementing partners receive a list of all mine fields and battle area fields that are still contaminated by mines, unexploded ordinance (UXO) or explosive remnants of war from the Mine Action Coordination Centre for Afghanistan (MACCA). Based on this list, DDG's Operation Department prioritises areas for clearance. Task selection is done following an assessment and consultations with village elders. Tasking is done annually and performance is measured quarterly using the Balance Score Card⁴, in which performance is measured using indicators that include the number of tasks that have been completed as planned. DDG does not plan tasks beyond their annual planning and mainly relies on the MACCA to allocate tasks.⁵ The clearance of mine fields in a community may take a few weeks, a few months or even, sometimes, years depending on the number of mine fields, size and degree of contamination. Impact assessments are done a minimum of six months after clearance has been completed.

The goal of the current DDG project supported by Sida is to assist the Government of Afghanistan and the United Nations Mine Action Centre Afghanistan, MACCA, in achieving the aims of the Afghanistan Compact and in compliance with the Ottawa Convention. The project was designed to include:

- Clearance of landmines and ERW,
- Capacity building of national staff and
- Provision of Mines Risk Education

The target group was the mine-affected populations in the Central and North regions of Afghanistan, including the provinces of Balkh, Samangan, Sar-e-Pol and Jowzjan within the responsibility area covered by Sweden's military Provincial Reconstruction Team.

Expected outputs were:

- 1,495,000 m² of contaminated land released through clearance
- Increased involvement of local staff in the management of DDG activities through continued capacity building
- Operational competence levels are maintained through the involvement of the Programme Training Cell

When Sida signed the project agreement in 2010, DDG's total annual budget amounted to some 70 MSEK with different components being financed by a variety of donors including UNOPS, Denmark, Netherlands, Germany, Japan and Canada. At the time that this evaluation took place, DDG's overall budget had been reduced so

⁴ See Annex for more details on the Balance Score Card.

⁵ A flowchart illustrating this process is attached as an annex.

that Sweden's contribution amounted to some 60% of DDG's total programme resources.

1.2.3 Afghanistan Mine Action Strategy

DDG is an implementing partner of the Mine Action Programme of Afghanistan, operations in Afghanistan. MAPA is one of the largest 'humanitarian' (i.e. non-military) mine action programmes in the world and encompasses all pillars of mine action: advocacy, demining, stockpile destruction, mine risk education, and victim assistance.⁶ The Afghan Mine Action Strategy is led by MAPA and focuses on achieving the Afghan Compact and mine-ban treaty (Ottawa Convention) benchmarks that had the goal of, by the end of 2010, reducing the land area contaminated by mines and unexploded ordnance by 70% and all unsafe, and destroying all unserviceable and surplus ammunition, along with the clearance of all Anti-Personnel (AP) landmines, in Afghanistan by 2013.

1.2.4 The Afghanistan Government & Mine Action

In 2002 the Government of Afghanistan entrusted interim responsibility for mine action to the United Nations, via a coordination body managed by the United Nations Mine Action Service (UNMAS). In January 2008, through the modality of an Inter-Ministerial Board for Mine Action, the Government designated the Department of Mine Clearance (DMC) under the Afghan National Disaster Management Authority to work jointly with the UN coordination body, the Mine Action Coordinating Committee for Afghanistan. DMC and MACCA are jointly responsible for the coordination of all mine action activities in Afghanistan and they meet monthly with Implementing Partners to discuss operational planning, security, new technologies and other relevant issues. MACCA is also responsible for supporting the development of national capacity for mine action management to the Government of Afghanistan. MACCA's HQ is in Kabul and has Area Mine Action Centres (AMACs) in Kabul, Herat, Kandahar, Mazar-i-Sharif, Kunduz, Gardez, and Jalalabad that are staffed by national staff.

The DMC was established in 1989 under an inter-ministerial committee comprising National Security, Defence, and Interior, but as this did not function well DMC was appended to the Disaster Preparedness Department where it has remained ever since, although with scant resources and modest capacity.⁷ DMC has nevertheless been recently reaffirmed as the main government focal point for mine action and was relocated to the MACCA office as part of the on-going transition process.

⁶ http://www.macca.org.af/en/MAPA_and_MACCA.html

⁷ Patterson, T. et al. (2008)

Other government agencies with mine action responsibilities include:

- Ministry of Foreign Affairs was designated the lead ministry for mine action following the country's accession to the Antipersonnel Mine Ban Convention
- Ministry of Education has committed to a role in MRE
- Ministry of Public Health is responsible for providing medical care and physical rehabilitation services to people with disabilities, including landmine survivors, and has established a Disability Unit that is supported by MACCA
- Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs, Martyrs and Disabled is responsible for addressing social stigmatisation of persons with disabilities, including landmine survivors

In common with other implementing partners, most of DDG's interaction with the government has been via the MACCA, but this will change over the coming years with the current transition of MACCA's decision-making authority to the DMC. At a provincial level, MACCA's offices are also being relocated to the provincial offices of the Department of Economy to encourage better integration.

In March 2012 the government of Afghanistan submitted a 10-year extension request to the States who are party to the Ottawa Mine Ban Treaty, proposing to remove all anti-personnel mines in the country by 2023. The extension request includes a work plan to remove all hazards (including Anti-Tank (AT) mine fields and battle fields).⁸ Mine action stakeholders have submitted a joint proposal requesting a total of over US\$136 million for the first two years of the extension.⁹ Most of the remaining mines are in relatively remote areas, so compliance is likely to, increasingly, become the primary driver in prioritising mine action over safety issues as mine casualty rates continue their decline.

1.2.5 Gender Equality in Afghanistan & DDG's Commitments

Prior to the Soviet occupation, women and girls in Afghanistan saw an increase in their educational and professional opportunities, notably in urban centers. Continuing conflict during the 1990s along with the formation of an Islamic State by the Mujahideen and the Taliban's subsequent rise to power led to a return to more traditional roles for women and their rights, and an erosion of their economic and social conditions. During the past decade the Government of Afghanistan, with the support of donor governments, has made considerable progress in developing policies

⁸ MACCA (2013)

⁹ <http://www.mineaction.org/programmes/afghanistan>

and legislation that are designed to promote gender equality; but amidst continuing fragility, the implementation of these instruments has been challenging.¹⁰

DDG Afghanistan has committed to at least two of these key policies; the 2006 Afghan Compact (which contains the government's vision for 2020 in terms of gender equality¹¹) and to the 2008-2018 National Action Plan for the Women of Afghanistan that has as a primary aim to protect and promote Afghan women's rights. DDG staff are also subject to DRC's 2007 Code of Conduct, which obliges them to show respect for all persons equally without distinction of gender. DDG Afghanistan's current three-year strategy¹² includes the following commitments:

- Champion equal opportunities for women in our programmes, including integration into DDG's capacity building plan
- Understand the different ways men and women experience the threat of mines and ERW, armed violence, underdevelopment, rights abuses etc.
- Extend genuine participation to female stakeholders and beneficiaries
- Overtly address gender in all stages of the project cycle

An assessment of DDG's progress on these commitments based on findings from this evaluation is provided later in this report.

¹⁰ Food Security and Agriculture Cluster (2013)

¹¹ Principle 5 of the Compact states that the Afghan government and the international community will "Build lasting Afghan capacity and effective state and civil society institutions, with particular emphasis on building up human capacities of men and women alike." (page 2)

¹² DDG Strategic Programme Document (SPD) A Country Strategy and Accountability Plan for 2013-2015

2 Methodology

This was an external review using evaluative approaches to promote learning and accountability that included a desk review of reference documents, and semi-structured individual and group interviews during a field visit. Inductive and deductive approaches used quantitative and qualitative data gathered from a purposely-selected range of sources, as described below. To assist with data integrity and factual accuracy during the review, team members met on a daily basis to review, compare, triangulate and analyse data collected.

To compensate for the relatively limited scope of this evaluation, much of the analysis relied on existing data in DDG and MACCA¹³ databases, previous evaluations of DDG, interviews of experts¹⁴ with previous experience in Afghanistan and comparisons with two peer agencies. The field visit to Afghanistan was used to check consistency of data by sampling in so far as it was feasible to do so within the limited timeframe and sample size. This mixed methods approach was designed to help the team assess the reliability and consistency of existing data and obtain a suitable mix of internal and external (including peer comparisons) perspectives. Individual team members were assigned focal point responsibilities for specific themes and issues as follows:

Team Member	Thematic Focal Point Responsibilities
Jock Baker	Humanitarian issues, protection, gender equality programming, accountability to beneficiaries and conflict sensitivity.
Mark Buswell	Technical mine action elements, including data collection, analysis, technical advice and support to other team members.
[name protected]	National contextual analysis, community participation, and gender data collection and analysis.
[name protected]	National contextual analysis, planning, infrastructure, governance, and conflict analysis in addition to being the logistics focal point for the team.

¹³ One of MACCA's responsibilities is to carry out external monitoring on 10% of the tasks for each implementing partner, and thus help in establishing the validity of DDG data.

¹⁴ Mainly specialists from the Geneva International Center for Humanitarian Demining who had previous experience of working in Afghanistan or were currently working there.

This helped to ensure adequate coverage of documentation, analysis, key issues emerging from interviews and focus-group discussions while also creating periodic opportunities for validation by key stakeholders. A debriefing session with DDG and Sida staff, held at the end of the field mission, provided an opportunity to complement and validate provisional findings, conclusions and recommendations.

A total of 62 individuals were interviewed during the course of the evaluation (34 males and 28 females). Thirty-one of these were individual key informant interviews by telephone or face-to-face encounters in Geneva or during the field visit. The remaining 31 interviewees participated in one of nine Focus Group Discussions (FGDs). Fourteen DDG staff were interviewed and the balance was a purposely selected sample from MACCA, DMC, peer mine action agencies, an international development agency, local authorities and the affected population, men as well as women in addition to three experts from the Geneva International Centre for Mine Action (GICHD) who had worked in Afghanistan. The list of interviewees is provided in Annex 3.

This evaluation assessed the extent to which gender had been mainstreamed into the programme's implementation, and whether there are indications that it has contributed to improving gender equality. The presence of a female member on the evaluation team was invaluable since it would have otherwise been impossible to directly capture women's perspectives. DDG staffing structures and staff awareness were also assessed through a gender equality lens by reviewing management structures, assessing the understanding of individual senior staff regarding gender approaches (including any gender training they had been through) and their approach to gender analysis.

Sustainability for the project was assessed from different perspectives, namely: 1) the contribution to achieving the aims of the Afghanistan Compact and compliance with the Ottawa Convention, Protocol V to the 1980 Weapons Convention and the Convention on Cluster Munitions (i.e. a mine-free Afghanistan), 2) training of DDG national staff to equip them to fill professional roles both inside and outside the field of mine action and 3) the sustainability of DDG Afghanistan's business model in the current operating context.

2.1 INCEPTION PHASE AND PLANNING

The evaluation has followed a number of steps concerning research, data collection, triangulation, analysis, validation and reporting:

- Briefing and scoping: Start-up meetings with Programme Staff in Sida's Conflict Department and DDG Afghanistan staff
- Preliminary document research: a document review using both internal and external documents, correspondence, reports and relevant data, as well as policies and frameworks relevant to emergency response
- Preliminary analysis of data gathered through the scoping process and preparation of this Inception Report, which will define the focus of this study

Eight working days were allocated in the work plan for the visit to Afghanistan, which were used as follows:

- 1 day in Kabul for orientation meetings and preliminary data collection;
- 4-5 days¹⁵ based in northern Afghanistan, including 2 days for site visits, interviews with beneficiary communities and other interviews with key informants in Mazar-e- Sharif
- 2-3 days in Kabul for key informant interviews, visit to the training center, data collection/analysis and debriefing on preliminary findings and conclusions with DDG and Sida staff

2.2 FIELD VISITS

During the inception phase, it was agreed that selection criteria for project site visits would include:

- Sites where there are on-going project activities;
- Sites where tasks funded under the project have been completed (to facilitate an assessment of outcome/impacts);
- Satisfactory security risk assessment; and
- Direct access to male and female beneficiaries.

Four tasks, two on-going and two completed, were visited during the two days allocated for site visits.¹⁶ Separate focus group discussions were held in nearby communities in two sites. For comparison purposes a site, where HALO Trust was working, was also visited and staff were interviewed.

Given the limited time spent in the field, the timing of the evaluation proved fortuitous since it overlapped with a simultaneous mission by two Gender Specialists from GICHD who were conducting a Gender Baseline Assessment for MAPA in Afghanistan. GICHD has also been commissioned to carry out a global Programming Synergies Study for DDG and DRC that is aiming to analyse and further develop DDG and DRC joint programming. This study also foresaw a mission to Afghanistan in late May that included a visit to the Pansher Valley, where DRC had implemented a follow-up pilot project during 2012 to improve land use based on DDG impact monitoring findings. While results from these two activities were not available prior to finalising this report, the evaluation nevertheless was able to benefit from preliminary data collected and insights of those involved in these studies.

¹⁵ Two team members returned to Kabul after four days to continue with data collection in Kabul while the other two members remained in Mazar-e-Sherif to carry out key informant interviews.

¹⁶ Photographs of each of the four sites are attached as an annex.

2.3 LIMITATIONS AND CONSTRAINTS

The main limitations and constraints that impacted the study were:

- Time limitations - the total time spent by the team in Afghanistan amounted to less than a week, with almost two days spent travelling to and from Mazar-e-Sherif. This, along with security restrictions that did not allow expatriates to spend the night outside major urban centres, meant that only two days could be allocated for visiting project sites – one of which required an 8-hour round trip from Mazar-e-Sherif. In Kabul, availability of key informants along with time needed to travel in congested traffic limited the number of external stakeholders that team members could meet.
- Limited selection of sites – along with the time constraints that limited the number of former task sites that could be visited; there were only two active tasks in the project at the time of the field visit. Purposive sampling, rather than random sampling, was thus used in selecting sites during this evaluation.
- Cultural barriers to interviewing women – community leaders in rural areas only allowed the female member of the team to meet with women in the communities, which limited the ability of team members to triangulate interview results from this stakeholder group.

Limited primary data - given the limited opportunity for primary data collection, there was a reliance on existing data from DDG and MACCA databases to measure performance and impact. Data collection and validation was nevertheless facilitated by the organised nature of mine action systems and standards¹⁷ along with MACCA's external monitoring role for implementing partners, which helps to ensure the consistency and credibility of implementing partner data¹⁸. One limitation was that data for individual implementing partners in MACCA's database is confidential, so only DDG's data could be identified.

¹⁷ Afghanistan Mine Action Standards (AMAS) <http://www.macca.org.af/en/AMAS.html>

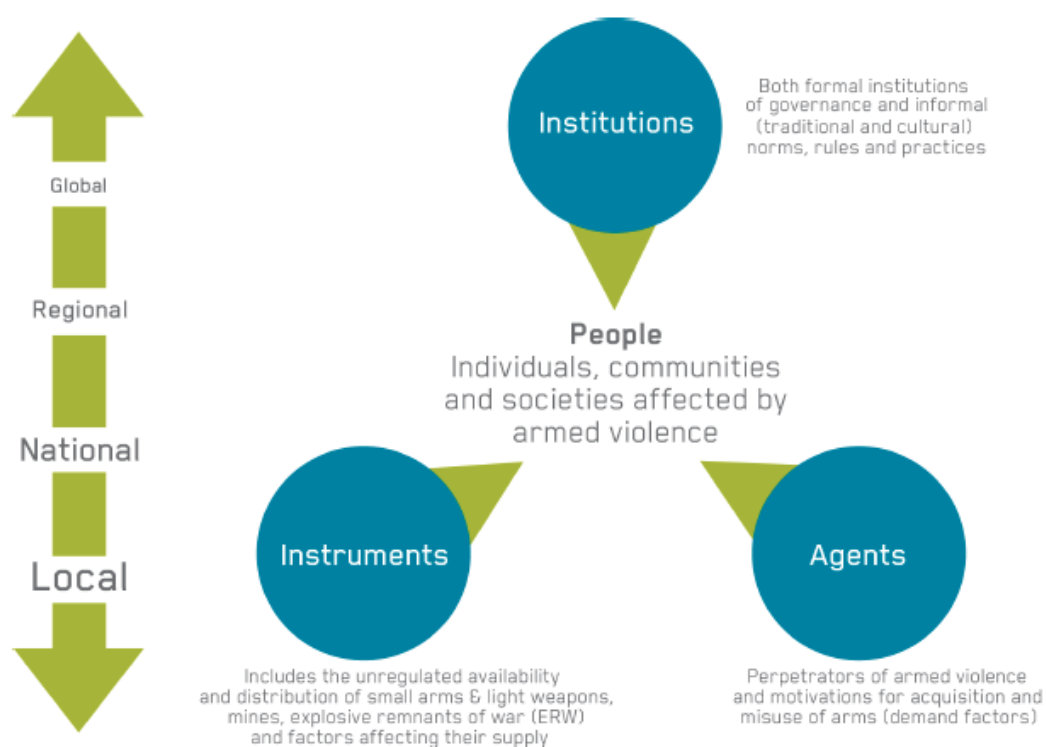
¹⁸ MACCA (2011)

3 DDG Strategy, AVR Framework & Performance Measurement Systems

3.1 DDG STRATEGY & AVR FRAMEWORK

DDG's global Armed Violence Reduction Framework¹⁹ provides a theory of change that underpins DDG's armed violence reduction operations and operational guidelines as well as entry and exit criteria for armed violence reduction programmes. The primary aim is to ensure the respect, protection and fulfillment of the right to life, safety and security for conflict-affected populations by addressing the threats posed by armed violence, mines, unexploded ordnance and small arms & light weapons.

Figure 1 Armed Violence Reduction Lens²⁰



¹⁹ DDG (2012a)

²⁰ Based on OECD (2009)

DDG takes a multi-faceted approach to their operations:

People: DDG has a bottom-up focus on the safety needs and perceptions of the individuals, communities and societies impacted by armed violence. All programming is therefore designed with a firm focus on people.

Agents: DDG uncovers the motives for armed violence, engages with perpetrators of, and accomplices to, armed violence, and seeks to address factors that fuel the demand for weapons and existing patterns of violence.

Instruments: DDG addresses the accessibility and availability of small arms and light weapons and explosive remnants of war.

Institutions: DDG works to positively impact formal institutions and informal cultural norms, rules, policies, legal frameworks and practices that can enable or protect against violence.

At a country level, DDG's programme in Afghanistan is mainly guided by their three-year strategy²¹ supported by an annual "Result Based Contract".²² Annual workplans guide DDG's interventions for specific projects, including the project supported by Sida.

3.2 DDG PERFORMANCE MEASUREMENT

MACCA has the key responsibility for external quality assurance of over 40 demining humanitarian and private sector agencies implementing partners in Afghanistan²³. MACCA carries out external quality assurance for approximately 10% of all ongoing or closed projects of each of their accredited implementing partners and DDG is therefore required to systematically:

- a) Conduct internal quality assurance and quality control of their operational tasks in accordance with AMAS, internal organisation's Standard Operating Procedures and the terms of the contract;
- b) Record the results of the internal monitoring on forms/reports ensuring all major (critical) and minor (non-critical) non-conformities are clearly recorded;
- c) Make available documentation concerning site visits and inspections as required to the external monitoring body;
- d) Provide external monitoring with access to all sites, personnel and other facilities which need to be visited;

²¹ DDG Afghanistan (2012)

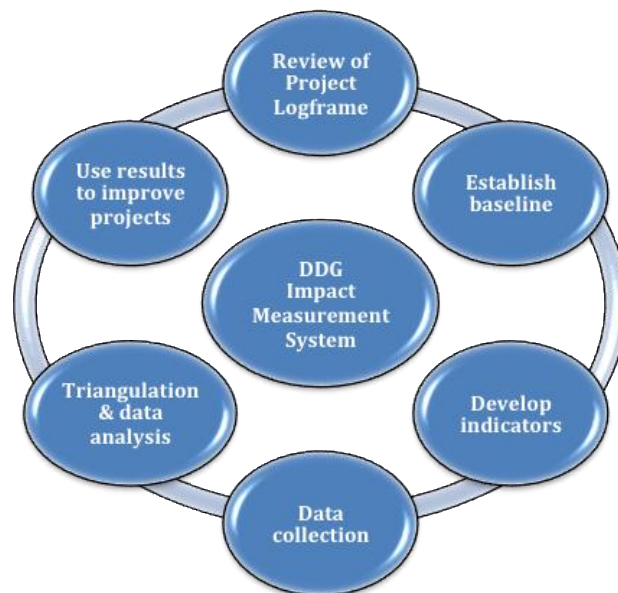
²² DDG Afghanistan (2013a)

²³ MACCA (2011)

- e) Acknowledge conclusions/suggestions and/or recommendations made by the external monitoring body and ensure appropriate follow up action is implemented and adhered to.

This quality assurance system focuses mainly at an output level and, while MACCA has recently been involved in livelihoods assessments²⁴, DDG was acknowledged by external informants as an agency that has taken a lead in developing impact measurement systems. DDG is rolling out their impact measurement system²⁵ at a global level with an aim to assess the change which projects are bringing to targeted communities. The process begins with an initial baseline assessment during the non-technical survey where, in Afghanistan, MRE teams have a key role and this is followed up by an impact assessment a minimum of six months following completion of a task.

Figure 2 DDG Impact Measurement Cycle



Both baseline and impact measurement surveys are carried out by male and female²⁶ Mine Risk Education teams. At the time of the field visit, the majority of the baseline surveys in project areas had been carried out in mid-2009 and impact measurement activities in project areas took place during 2011 and 2012.²⁷

²⁴ MACCA, GICHD and the Natural Resources Institute (2011)

²⁵ DDG (2012b)

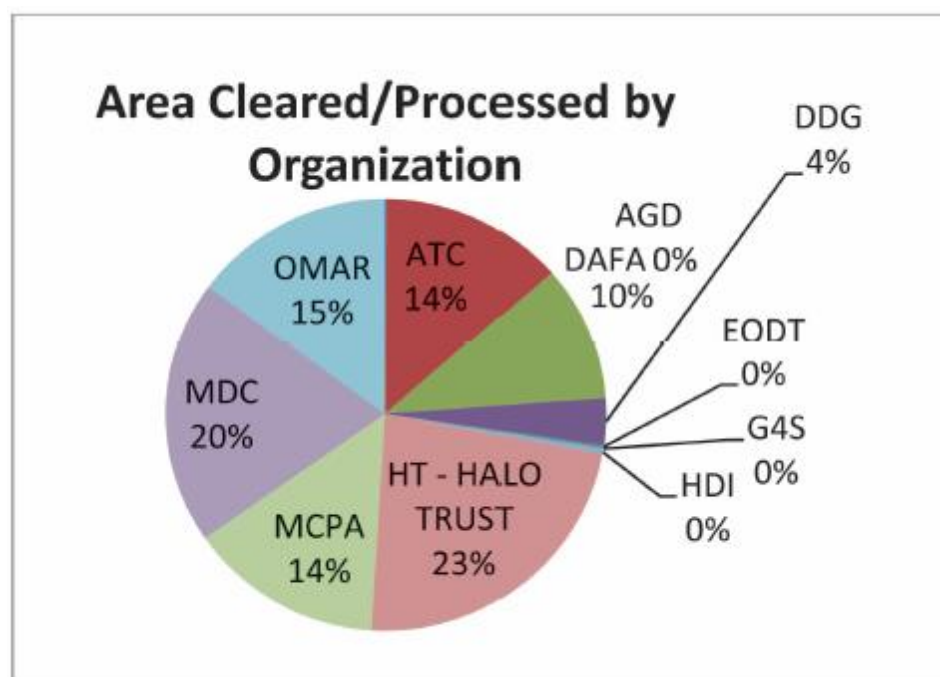
²⁶ Male/female teams are relatives (usually husband/wife or brother/sister) in accordance with Afghan customs.

²⁷ DDG (2011 and 2013b) Impact Monitoring Reports for project sites in Samangan and Balkh Provinces

4 DDG's Position in Afghanistan's Mine Action Programme

DDG is one of two international agencies that are implementing partners of the Mine Action Programme of Afghanistan. The only other international implementing partner is the HALO Trust, which has been active in Afghanistan since the late 1980s.

Figure 3 Area Cleared by Organisation²⁸



DDG can thus be considered to be the smallest “active” implementing partner of MACCA, and is the only implementing partner that is part of another international agency (DRC).

²⁸ MAPA (2012) MAPA Annual Report 1390 http://www.macca.org.af/en/MAPA_Reports.html

5 Main Findings

5.1 OVERALL

The operating environment for mine action agencies in Afghanistan has changed significantly over the past few years. Remaining hazards to be cleared are a combination of highland areas (which may or may not be located in the vicinity of communities) or in remote areas. As the threat of mines has decreased, a trend can be seen amongst national and regional government planners to accord less priority to humanitarian mine action while increasingly focusing on development activities. NGOs have started working in some of the communities where DDG has completed tasks, and observations and discussions during the site visits suggest that there may be untapped potential in terms of mine action agencies supporting needs assessments and promoting the engagement of development actors at an early stage. DDG's impact measurement systems have enabled it to play a pioneering role in formally recognising the links between mine action and development by collaborating with DRC, who implemented two pilot livelihood projects to explore these approaches.

Amongst its peers, DDG is not only viewed positively for the operational capacity and additional funding that they bring to mine action operations, but also for DDG's willingness to be transparent, coordinate with other agencies and collaborate on joint activities such as joint proposals. DMC and MACCA also appreciate DDG's flexibility – DDG is valued as an implementing partner that does not shy away from challenging tasks. However, as described in more detail below, it is clear that DDG Afghanistan will need to adjust its business model to remain sustainable in the changing operating context.

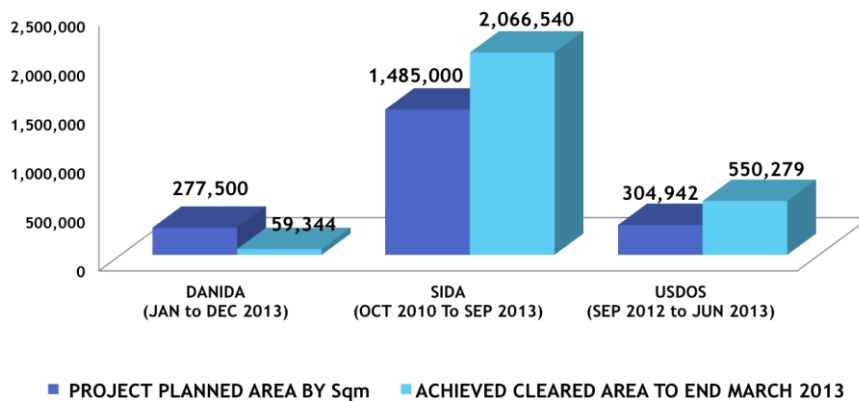
5.1.1 Mine Clearance

DDG reported a total of 21,650,795 hazard-free square meters in all their projects between the early 2010 and April 2013, of which 2,066,540 square meters were cleared under the project in Balkh and Samangan Provinces in northern Afghanistan.

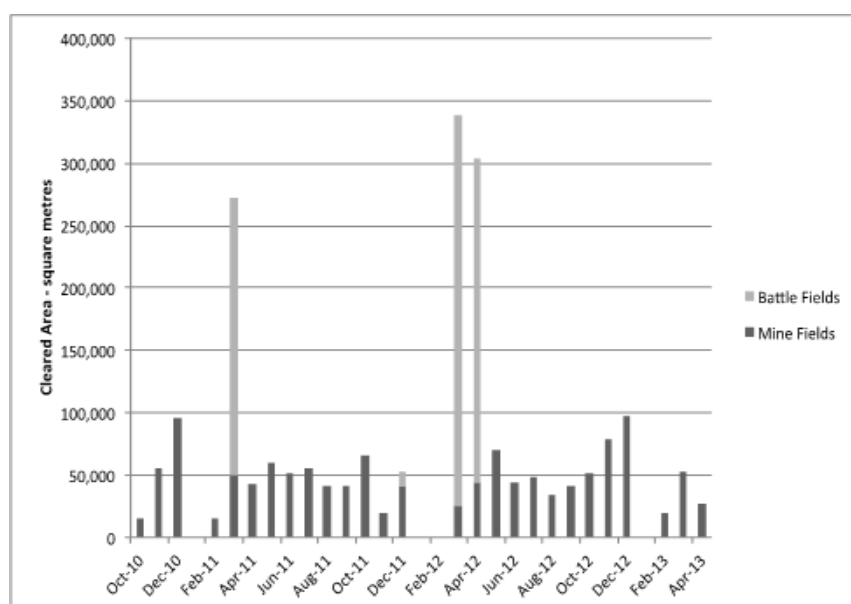
Table 1 Areas cleared by DDG 2010 – April 2013 (all projects)

All DDG Projects: 2010 - April 2013									
YEAR	AREA RELEASED (SQM)		AREA REDUCED AFTER SURVEY	VERIFIED AREA BY MDU	TOTAL RELEASED AREA	DEVICES FOUND			
	MINE AREA	BATTLE AREA				AT	AP	UXO	SAA
2010	2,050,042	4,356,882	886,057	66,996	7,359,977	5	3,055	9,052	24,343
2011	2,060,876	6,027,257	249,451	151,760	8,489,344	4	2,191	6,361	4,054
2012	2,847,453	1,983,101	603,063	900,36	5,523,653	8	2,025	4,591	2,026
2013	274,337	3,484	0	0	277,821	0	168	196	0
Total	7,232,708	12,370,724	1,738,571	308,792	21,650,795	17	7,439	20,200	30,423

This cleared area exceeded the target, which can be attributed to a combination of redeployment of teams from other projects after they had come to an end and large areas of battle area clearance (which improves square meter coverage and balances out some of the slow, remote and mountainous tasks).

Figure 4 Areas Cleared by Project²⁹

²⁹ Source: DDG

Figure 5 Type of Clearance under the Project³⁰

According to DDG records, over 7,000 direct and some 62,000 indirect beneficiaries have been reached by the project supported by Sida.

Table 2 Numbers of Direct and Indirect Beneficiaries (Sida project)

PROVINCE WORKED ON	NO OF DISTRICTS WORKED ON	NO OF VILLAGE	NO OF HAZARDS RELEASED		BENEFICIARIES	
			MINE CONTAMINATION TASKS	ERW CONTAMINATION TASKS	DIRECT	INDIRECT
BALKH	4	11	10	2	2,205	23,879
SAMANGAN	4	6	20	0	2944	31739
PARWAN	2	3	2	1	2,454	7,120
TOTAL	10	20	32	3	7,603	62,737

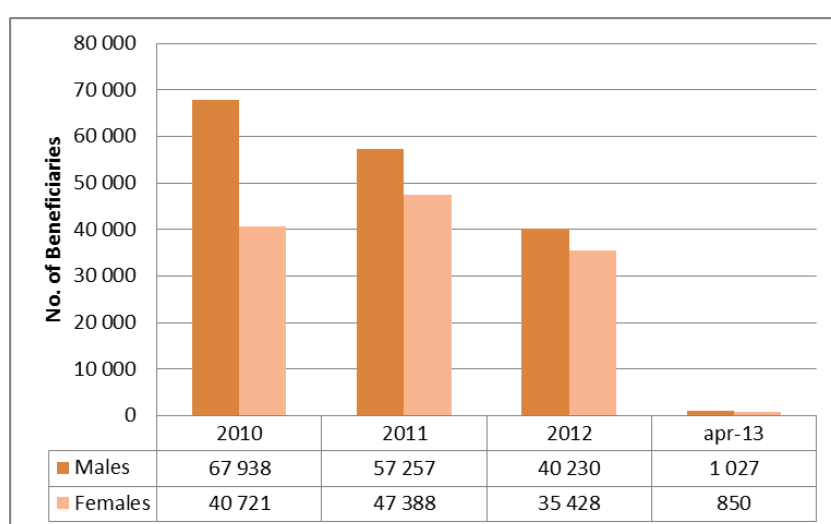
5.1.2 Mine Risk Education

Although Mine Risk Education teams were not funded under the project, they have also supported this project, since they are viewed by DDG as an integral part of mine action.

³⁰ DDG Data as of March 2013

MRE is done during both the survey phase and at the beginning of the implementation phase, when separate sessions are also held for women and children. Since 2009, DDG MRE Teams have also been responsible for the collection of baseline and impact measurement data. According to data provided by DDG, MRE has reached more than 290,000 community members in all their projects (including the project supported by Sida between 2010 and April 2013).

Figure 6 Number of MRE Beneficiaries 2010 – April 2013 (all DDG Projects)³¹



Socio-cultural norms in Afghanistan, particularly in rural areas, make it virtually impossible for male MRE trainers to speak to women and also mean that women cannot travel without a chaperone. DDG has managed to deal with this challenge by recruiting male and female teams of relatives, i.e. either husband-wife or brother-sister teams, thus enabling a gender equality approach.

5.1.3 Training of DDG Staff

DDG has prioritised the staff training component of their programme as it is not only seen as an important contribution to the effectiveness and cost-efficiency of operations, but also as a vehicle to build skills of national staff in both mine action and for the broader workplace.

Between October 2012 and March 2013 a total of 3,667 courses were completed by participants, of which 2,388 were related to mine action skill building and 1,279 were general capacity building (English language training, computer skills, etc.). Of the

³¹ *ibid*

mine action training, 75% were refresher courses. A table showing details of courses is attached in Annex 7.

5.2 RELEVANCE

This evaluation attempts to assess relevance in terms of whether DDG is “doing the right thing” in terms of the following:

- Does the project address relevant strategic priorities of Sweden³², DDG³³ and the government of Afghanistan³⁴ and how are its activities coordinated?
- Did DDG operations address the needs and priorities of the affected population?
- Were the outcomes/objectives of the project valid, both in the initial project design and following adjustments during subsequent revisions?

DDG’s activities were found to be relevant in all of the above aspects with respect to mine action priorities, although interviews with provincial officials indicated that the relevance of mine action within overall national priorities remain, as the most populated areas have been cleared and the number of mine victims has declined. The Mine Action Programme for Afghanistan Mine Action Strategic Guideline for 2008–2013 planned on removing the remaining hazards in the country to achieve the Afghanistan Compact and Ottawa Treaty obligations.³⁵ DDG’s activities were carried out in accordance with MACCA and DMC priorities and task allocation procedures. DDG’s activities similarly supported Sweden’s own priorities, both through its operations and training activities for national staff, as articulated in the government’s Policy for Security and Development in Swedish Development Cooperation 2010–2014³⁶:

- Promote broad accession to and effective application of the Ottawa Convention, Protocol V to the 1980 Weapons Convention and the Convention on Cluster Munitions.
- Promote the strengthening of the national capacity of individual countries to deal with mines. This includes the ability to meet the long-term challenge of non-governmental groups still using mines and improvised explosive devices.

³² Notable relevant policies and priorities outlined in Sweden’s *Peace and Security for Development Policy for Security and Development In Swedish Development Cooperation 2010–2014*.

³³ Danish Demining Group Strategy 2013–2015.

³⁴ As described in MACCA’s Mine Action Programme for Afghanistan Mine Action Strategic Guideline 2008–2013

³⁵ MACCA (2012). In March 2012, Afghanistan submitted a 10-year extension request to the States Parties of the Ottawa Mine Ban Treaty to remove anti-personnel mines in the country by 2023. DDG was one of seven agencies that supported DMC and MACCA in developing the workplan for the extension and prioritising tasks.

³⁶ Government Offices (2010) page 24

At a community level, DDG's impact monitoring results show consistently high levels of satisfaction amongst beneficiary communities in terms of the clearance of areas from hazards, rendering them safe for human activities. Most residual needs were linked to requests for livelihood support. MACCA external monitoring and focus group discussions with community members living near three task sites (two active and one completed) were consistent with DDG's results. Much of the data that DDG collects is gender disaggregated and, as described above, DDG MRE teams are composed of both male and female members that have made it possible to equally gather perspectives of males and females.

DDG's project has been subject to an annual bilateral review between Sida and DDG staff at a HQ (Stockholm) level to review progress and undertake revisions. The relevance of these processes was affected since discussions mainly took place between HQ staff from the two agencies and thus lacked a full appreciation of field realities. This has contributed to the perception, by field staff from each agency, that both HQs were making information demands without always giving sufficient support in return. This has been compounded by relatively infrequent HQ visits. The Sida focal point that was initially appointed to manage the DDG project never visited Afghanistan, and the first visit by HQ staff only took place more than two years after the project had started, in late 2012, after a new focal point had been designated. The change to more hands-on engagement by Sida HQ was viewed very positively by both DDG and Sida staff in Afghanistan and was perceived to have contributed to a deeper understanding of the complex operational environment and facilitated more constructive discussions. Despite the lack of Sida monitoring visits during the initial phase of the project, the combination of MACCA's effective coordination of mine action activities, along with a flexible approach adopted by Sida towards project management, helped to ensure that DDG's activities remained relevant overall during the project period and resources could be shifted as needed to support critical activities.

DDG's relevance has been good in relation to project objectives. Mine clearance targets have been carried out in accordance with Afghan government/MACCA priorities; and capacity building of national staff and nationalisation of positions, although behind schedule, is being implemented. From the broader perspective of mine action relevance within the overall development priorities of Afghanistan, as more and more land has been cleared of munitions, the goal has been shifting from reducing direct threats to communities to one of achieving a mine-free Afghanistan within the next 10 years. This shift is already manifesting itself in the form of reduced budgets for mine action and a move towards competitive tendering, based mainly on costs per square metre, that tends to favour national agencies with lower overhead costs.

5.3 EFFECTIVENESS

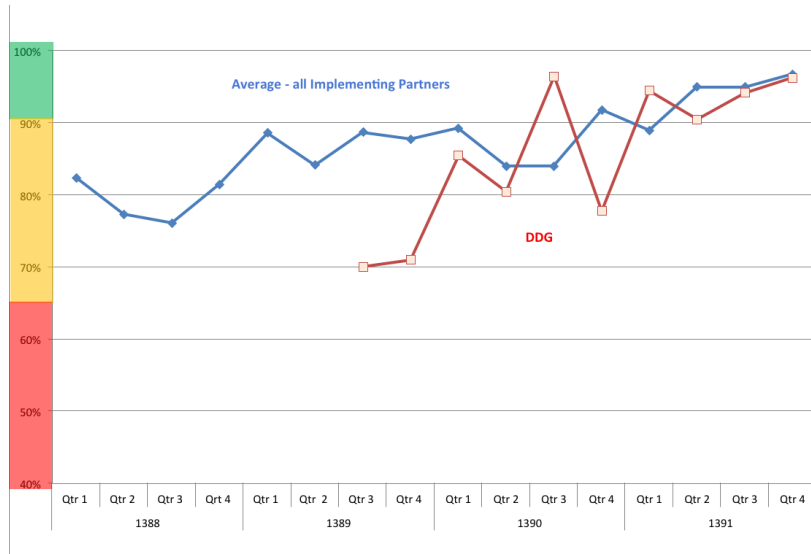
This evaluation measured the effectiveness of the DDG project in terms of how DDG tasks are planned, how resources are organised to contribute to effectiveness, and the comparative advantages of DDG in relation with its peers in Afghanistan, including how DDG has approached gender.

Task planning is done via an annual joint process that is coordinated by MACCA, together with its implementing partners. It begins in April of each year and usually concludes the following September, so that activities can start in February when temperatures start to increase and the snow in the highlands starts to melt. A flowchart illustrating the process is attached as an annex.

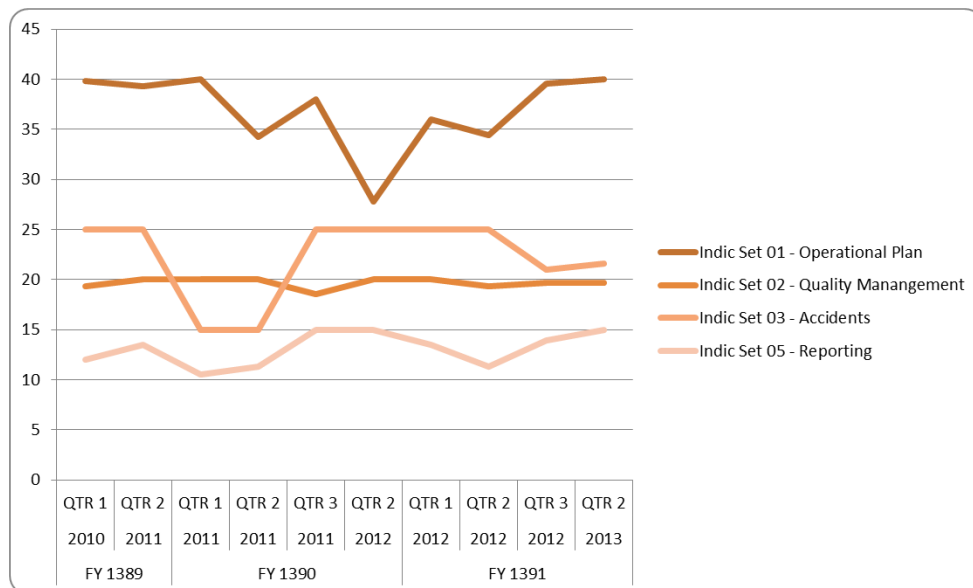
DDG, similar to most other implementing partners, has adopted a largely reactive approach to task selection – waiting for the priority list to be issued and then entering into negotiations of who does what. A few agencies, notably HALO Trust, have taken a more proactive approach in developing their own strategy, backed up by a budget in 2013 of more than \$18 million, which is an approach that has allowed them to make more strategic choices.

In mid-2009 MACCA introduced a tool based on the principles of the Balanced Score Card (BSC)³⁷, which centralised the results of monitoring and evaluation of their Implementing Partners with the aim of – not only – improving the efficiency and effectiveness of MACCA’s coordination function but also guiding donor funding allocations, while at the same time providing implementing partners with guidance on where they need to focus their institutional development. The BSC measures each MACCA implementing partner against a specific set of criteria, including operational planning, quality management, accidents and reporting. As seen below, although DDG scores were below average at the beginning of the project period, they have improved to the point that they are now in the “green” satisfactory performance zone and are consistent with average IP scores.

³⁷ Additional details on the BSC methodology and scoring are provided as an annex.

Figure 7. DDG vs. Average IP Balance Score Card Scores (Oct 2010–Mar 2013)

The figure above is a summary of the DDG projects supported by Sida. Lower scores can be partially attributed to a combination of security and weather-related constraints on operations and mine-related accidents. These are represented by the “dips” in the graph below.

Figure 8 BSC component scores for project mine clearance activities³⁸

³⁸ October 2010 - March 2013

The overall effectiveness of DDG operations at the time of the evaluation visit was satisfactory, although the next set of BSC scores will show another decline due to recent accidents during the past two quarters. It should be noted that the BSC is based on a discrete set of indicators and does not consider gender approaches, level of community participation or the quality of impact measurement...i.e. areas where available evidence suggests that DDG is performing relatively well in comparison with its peers.

As described in more detail below, DDG is constantly challenged to fill its commitments to gender equality due to traditional attitudes to women's roles in Afghanistan, notably in rural areas where DDG is working. In one community visited, girls often go to live with relatives in Mazar-e-Sherif so that they can continue schooling, since community leaders discourage girls from going beyond 3rd class. It, thus, should come as no surprise that DDG often needs to invest a considerable amount of time building trust with community elders prior to an intervention. Feedback from women during the field visit about the DDG's MRE activities was generally positive and MREs are usually done in a timely way. In one community visited, however, interviews revealed that several women had not been present during the initial MRE session during the non-technical survey; and the MRE session had, exceptionally, been delayed until 10 days after DDG had started demining operations. During a focus group discussion in that community, one woman laughed nervously as she told the story of how she had collected red stones (marking mine locations) to use as decorations and it was only after the MRE sessions that she understood how foolish she had been.

Measuring effectiveness through a mine action lens based on project objectives, DDG has performed well. Communities confirm that they feel safe about using land that has been cleared by DDG and a sample of tasks subjected to post-monitoring by MACCA provided independent confirmation of this finding. DDG has been quite successful at gathering women's views through their gender balanced MRE teams and women have a key role in reinforcing MRE messages for their children. However, women who were interviewed claimed that they were not involved in the process of handing over cleared land and played little part in decision-making about subsequent land use.

As described in the Impact section below, effectiveness, expressed in terms of actual land use and perceived poverty alleviation, provides a mixed picture. Post-intervention monitoring discovered that community members felt there had been positive changes in terms of food security and income generation opportunities³⁹, but

³⁹ See Figure 9

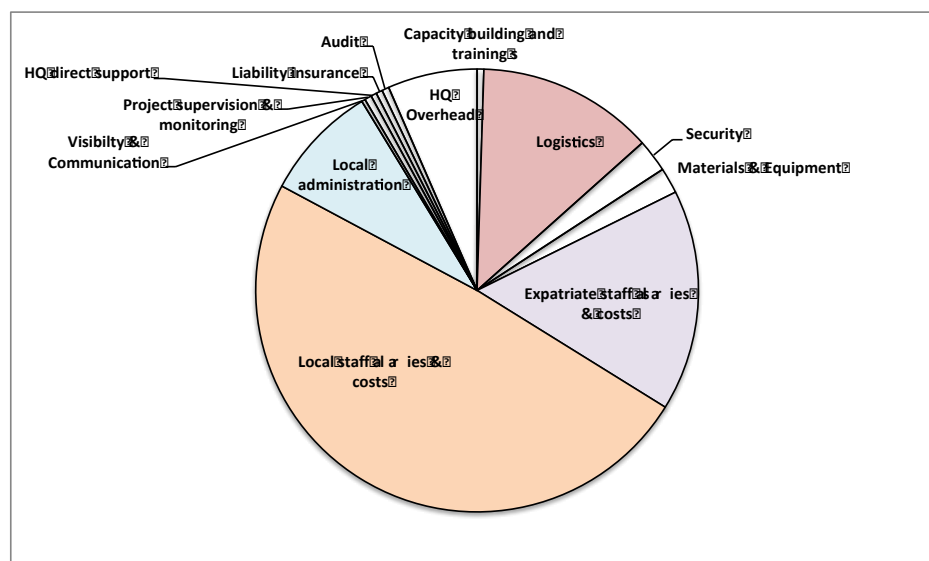
land is often underutilised due to other constraints, with one of the most common constraints being a lack of water to irrigate agricultural land. During focus group discussions, women spoke about their difficult economic conditions and desire for literacy programmes. The sense is that de-mining activities have helped to open a window and identify needs, but that DDG then leaves them behind when finishing a task and moving to the next site.

5.4 EFFICIENCY

This evaluation has approached efficiency through an analysis of DDG's cost drivers, how resources are allocated, operational and support costs (direct and indirect) and how DDG approaches cost efficiency. Findings indicate that this is an area that DDG will need to address as a priority to be able to continue to add value in a changing operating environment in Afghanistan.

DDG's main cost drivers are salaries and related costs, which in the most recent project budget revision, amounted to almost 50% for national staff and 16.6% international staff.

Figure 9 Breakdown of 2013 Version of the Project Budget



While it is usual that human resources absorb the bulk of resources in demining interventions, one of the main differences observed between DDG and its peer mine agencies is the number and proportion of international staff.

Table 3 DDG Staffing Oct 2010 - April 2013⁴⁰

Date	Total Staff	International	National
Oct 2010	783	11	772
Oct 2011	839	15	824
Apr 2013	369	7	362

The only other MACCA international implementing partner (the HALO Trust) had two international permanent positions out of a total of 3,000 staff⁴¹, as of May 2013. National implementing partners of MACCA did not appear to have any permanent international staff.

5.4.1 Comparative Cost of DDG Operations

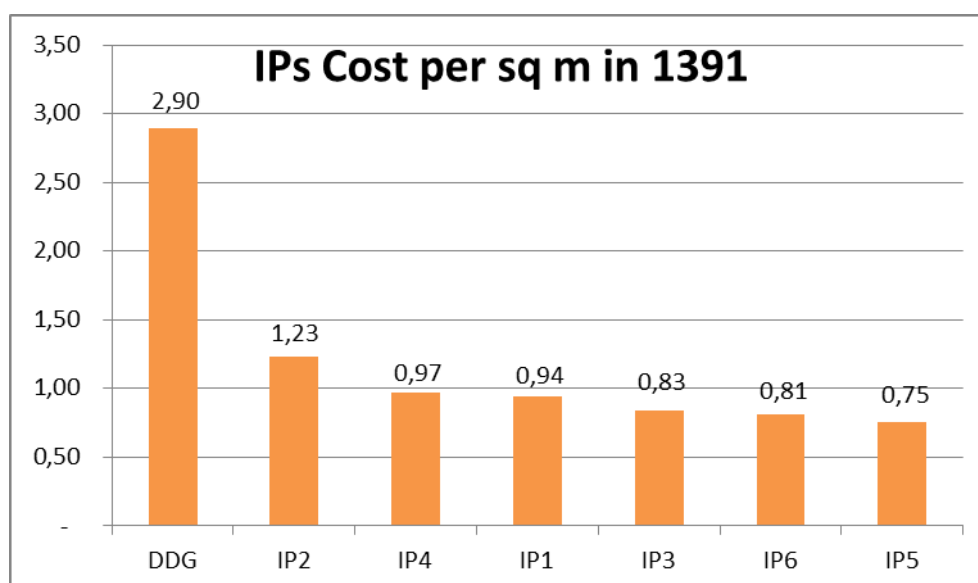
MACCA originally included cost criteria indicators in their Balance Score Card but subsequently dropped it since it was found that cost is affected by numerous variables and that including cost tended to misrepresent value for money⁴². Cost per square meter calculations thus need to be treated with a certain amount of caution since they need to be combined with a number of other factors (notably effectiveness) to give a reasonable assessment of value for money. MACCA does, nevertheless, carry out basic cost comparisons between the various non commercial implementing partners to help inform funding decisions based on proposals from different implementing partners for the Voluntary Trust Funds (VTF). The cost data that is provided below is based on MACCA calculations to clear one square meter (US\$/m²), while making certain additional calculations⁴³ to compensate for the different types of clearance tasks.

⁴⁰ Source: DDG Reports for the Ministry of the Economy

⁴¹ HALO Trust reportedly went through a period when they did not have any permanent international staff. This number does not include international staff who come to Afghanistan on regular missions.

⁴² http://www.macca.org.af/en/MAPA_Reports.html

⁴³ Average cost per square metre are in the ranges of US\$ 0.8-1.2 depending on the terrain condition, mine types, security situation in the area of operation, etc. while average costs per sq. m for Battlefield Surface clearance is \$ 0.07 and for Battle Field Sub Surface clearance is \$ 0.40. To arrive at these cost comparisons between implementing partners during 2012-13, MACCA has used a formula to convert Battle Area Clearance square meter figures into an equivalent square meter cost for mine fields.

Figure 10 Comparative Costs for VTF Project Proposals by IP: 2012-13⁴⁴

Using this formula, DDG was more than double the cost per square meter of other Implementing Partners. MACCA's cost comparison projections for the current year are similar, which is an indication that DDG needs to continue to increase cost effectiveness while demonstrating value-added in terms of quality, contribution towards national objectives, etc. to achieve a reasonable level of value for money.

Key factors observed that contribute to DDG's relatively higher costs include:

- Overhead cost⁴⁵ of implementing partners is typically in the range of 25-30% of the total cost depending on the size of the operation. Economies of scale tend to be advantageous in an Afghan context; and that puts DDG, as a relatively small implementing partner, at a disadvantage.
- The specific characteristics of DDG's tasks over the project period, many of which have been in difficult-to-access areas and tasks that result in slow progress in highlands, have translated into relatively higher costs per square meter.
- Transitioning from international to national staff positions that require a certain amount of overlap and duplication during the handover period.
- Emphasis on participatory approaches may increase costs relative to other organisations, although the team was unable to fully assess approaches by peer agencies.
- Relatively higher investments in impact measurement.

⁴⁴ Source: MACCA.

⁴⁵ MACCA estimates.

- Higher number/proportion of international staff (see table above).
- Corporate overhead costs that the national implementing partners do not need to cover.
- Large support capacity per operational clearance lanes.⁴⁶

At the end of 2012, DDG laid off over 500 staff due to a reduction in donor funding. DDG, therefore, currently find itself with a structure that is better suited to a larger organisation and is subsequently unable to spread its operational support costs while fielding fewer teams, which increases the cost per square meter. DDG has an operating structure based on small, mobile section sized teams (nine people, of which only five are producing clearance results). Such a structure is resource intensive, requiring higher numbers of vehicles, medical equipment and the associated running and management costs, whilst sacrificing clearance lanes for additional staff such as drivers and medics. This structure means that DDG is best suited to undertake such tasks as manual mine clearance in small areas; in remote locations these tasks are more often difficult and risky, which tends to reduce overall productivity.

DDG is taking steps to address this by, for example, reducing its overhead costs by sharing facilities with DRC and nationalising positions. Pressure on DDG to reduce its rates has progressively increased over the project period due to an increasingly competitive operating environment for mine action agencies in Afghanistan along with a reduction in the number of their donors to three⁴⁷, down from eight donors in late 2010. This, nevertheless, remains a key area which DDG needs to address if it is to continue to add value in the Afghan context over the coming years.

5.5 IMPACT

This evaluation sought to understand how DDG assesses the impact of its different activity areas and who is targeted. The links between the DDG and longer-term interventions were also reviewed, looking particularly at changes in land use and the impact on socio-economic conditions and poverty status of men and women.

As described in the Inception Report and the Limitations section above, the limited scope of this evaluation did not allow for a direct measurement of impact, but rather impact measurement was approached by reviewing existing impact data that was available from MACCA's external monitoring, previous DDG evaluations and DDG

⁴⁶ Cleared lane (sometimes referred to as safety lane) is the generic term for any lane, other than a boundary lane on the edge of a hazard area, which is cleared by a survey or clearance team to the international standard for cleared land. This may include access lanes outside the hazardous area or cross/verification lanes inside a hazardous area – see UNMAS (2003).

⁴⁷ As of May 2013, DDG's three donors were Sida, DANIDA and US COM.

Afghanistan's own impact measurement systems⁴⁸. Data that was produced from these systems was then validated to the extent possible by observations during visits to project sites and triangulation. This assessment not only looked at mine clearance operations, but also training activities, and the subsequent use of released land from the perspectives of men, women, boys and girls. DDG is viewed as one of the leaders in impact measurement of mine action activities, both at a global level and in Afghanistan, although other mine action agencies that were interviewed⁴⁹ suggested that they have since developed comparable systems, although no reports were made available for review by the evaluation team apart from DDG's.

Observations and focus group discussions during field visits highlighted different impacts on men and women. Almost all major populated areas had already been cleared of hazards prior to 2010, so women are, generally, currently less at risk than men or children because they remain at home. The exception is the Kuchin nomadic tribes, which regularly move like families in remote areas. Women are nevertheless impacted if male heads of households or children are injured and they have responsibilities in terms of guiding children to minimise risk and expressed appreciation for the MRE education that has been provided by DDG, since this has helped make them more effective in this role.

DDG impact measurement reports contain a wealth of information and results in the reports were, on the whole, consistent with sampling during the field visits. On the other hand, reports tend to be descriptive rather than analytical and there is little evidence that recommendations have been followed up. This is also the case for gender analysis; some of the data is disaggregated, but there is relatively little in terms of analysis and actionable recommendations. DDG reportedly uses impact measurement results as inputs into their annual planning exercises, but otherwise results do not appear to be widely communicated, even internally to their own staff. There was no evidence to suggest that results were being systematically synthesised and used for advocacy, learning and/or improving interventions.

The most recent impact measurement data provided to the evaluation team by DDG for project areas were from assessments that were carried out during April and December 2011 that captured perspectives from 169 women and 156 male respondents in the 18-65 age group from households that were randomly selected in three communities.⁵⁰ During the baseline survey prior to mine action operations, 35% of respondents felt that mines and UXOs posed a direct threat and 40% said that

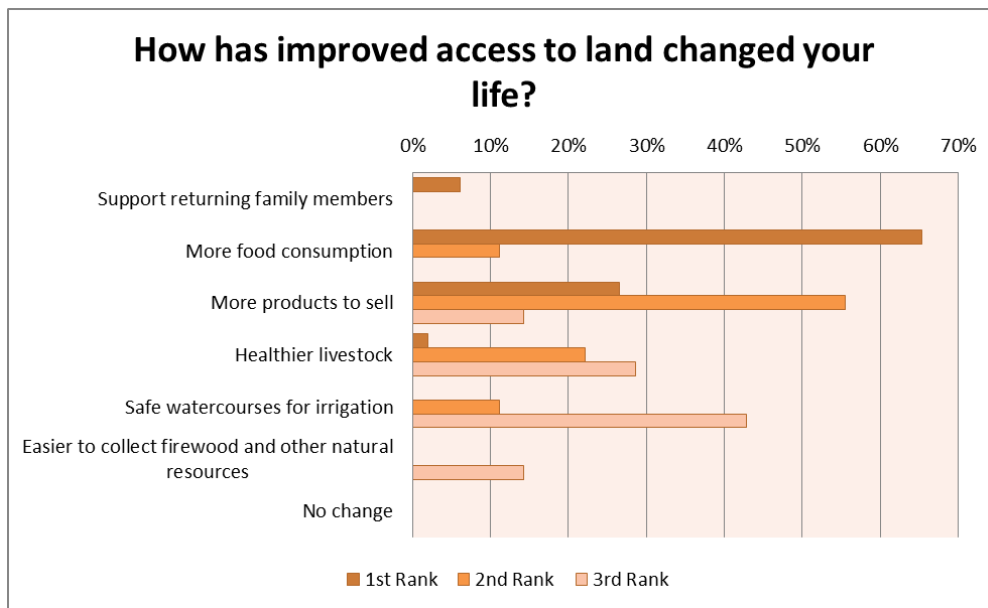
⁴⁸ A description of DDG's impact measurement system is given above.

⁴⁹ HALO Trust and OMAR

⁵⁰ DDG (2013) Impact Monitoring Report for Balkh Province. The three communities were Pushti Bagh, Kariz-e-Kalan and Baba Kohna. The baseline study included 73 females and 125 males.

mines limited grazing and agriculture activities. Impact measurement that was carried out after operations had been completed found that 100% of respondents no longer worried about threats from mines. As shown in the figure below, respondents saw improved food consumption as the main outcome of clearance.

Figure 11 Impact of clearance operations on livelihoods in Balkh Province



While DDG and other peer agencies have improved their ability to identify needs to improve land use productivity beyond just mine removal, DDG is one of the few agencies in Afghanistan that has taken this a step further to address remaining needs, via a collaboration with DRC in the Panjshir Valley in central Afghanistan to improve land productivity⁵¹.

Post-intervention monitoring following clearance of a minefield near the Bagram airbase in Parwan province found that removing hazards had only partially resolved problems faced by communities. Only around half of the cleared land was being used even though the community was satisfied that the area had been cleared of mines. The main reason for this was determined to be a lack of water for crop cultivation. After an assessment, DRC subsequently implemented a borehole drilling project for 300 beneficiary households in the communities of Se Dokan and Aka Khail. Based on this experience, DRC decided to implement a second project to further test the methodology. This second project was located in the Panjshir Valley and was focused

⁵¹ DDG & DRC (2013) Linking Mine Action & Development: A Joint DRC/DDG Project in the Panjshir Valley of Afghanistan (unpublished draft case study)

on increasing the scope of follow-on development activities to benefit the mine-affected community as a whole. It was not possible to assess the impact of these DRC follow-up interventions since the team did not visit the site(s), as they are in central Afghanistan and DRC was not planning to conduct impact monitoring of these interventions until June as part of the global DRC/DDG Synergies Study.⁵²

DDG has made good progress in improving its impact measurement systems to capture development-related needs, notably land use.⁵³ If DDG decides to develop a niche around links with development as a way of adding value, then it will be important to appropriately revise and improve systems for impact measurement and communication of results.

5.6 SUSTAINABILITY

Sustainability was approached from different perspectives during this evaluation; firstly in terms of how DDG's operations contributed to achieving the aims of the Afghanistan Compact and compliance with the Ottawa Convention, secondly concerning the sustainability of DDG's training for their national staff and finally about DDG Afghanistan's institutional sustainability.

DDG interventions have been sustainable, based on DDG impact monitoring complemented by MACCA's external post-intervention monitoring that confirmed tasks had been successfully cleared and communities have put them back into production. However, as noted elsewhere in this report, in many cases the clearance of land does not automatically result in full productivity – especially rain-fed agriculture systems.

DDG has emphasised sustainability when training DDG national staff to equip them to fill professional roles both inside and outside the mine action field. However, the sustainability of training activities proved difficult to gauge within the limited scope of this evaluation since DDG only carries out post-intervention monitoring of their mine action operations, not of their training programmes.

Relatively low cost-efficiency, along with a substantially reduced donor base in comparison to previous years, raises questions about the institutional sustainability of DDG's current business model in Afghanistan.

⁵² GICHD (2013)

⁵³ DDG's impact measurement questionnaire is attached as an annex.

5.7 RISK MANAGEMENT

This evaluation looked at risk management in terms of different stakeholder expectations, competitive advantage, relationships with national stakeholders (including gender specific relationships) and whether DDG faces any particularly challenges with corruption or other misuse of resources.

DDG has acquired extensive experience of managing risk in this complex context following over a decade of operating in Afghanistan. DDG manages risk through a combination of formal risk analyses that inform their annual scenario and risk management planning, while at the same time placing a specific emphasis on a community-based approach to assess and monitor risk levels in this dynamic operating context. In addition to investing time in building and maintaining good relations at a community level, DDG is seen as a strong supporter of the MACCA coordination structure which – among other benefits – facilitates information sharing with peers and higher levels of government to support risk management. DDG employs security guards for their offices and residences, has security protocols in place and provides appropriate training for staff and visitors.⁵⁴ Support to DDG staff has been provided by an international Security Officer in Kabul and by a national security focal point in Mazar-e-Sherif, but observations suggested that community-level relationships and networks play the most critical role in risk management and have helped DDG to maintain a humanitarian profile and move between project sites without the need for armed escorts.

DDG experienced a handful of serious security incidents prior to 2010, including one fatality, but no serious security-related incidents (apart from accidents during mine clearance) were reported during the current project period. DDG did encounter situations where they decided to suspend operations following advice from community members about security risks, which can be seen as an indicator that the system is functioning.

DDG is subject to DRC's policy for anti-corruption. A review of financial audit and interviews did not highlight any significant corruption issues that DDG had faced during the project period. The main financial management challenge that is currently being faced by DDG is not corruption, but is rather related to difficulties in dealing

⁵⁴ Evaluation team members also benefited as the team was provided with a comprehensive security briefing by a national DDG staff member at the start of the evaluation and updated again before visiting project sites. Both international members of the evaluation team have many years of experience working in insecure environments and assessed security support provided to the team by DDG as good quality.

with taxation and customs clearance regulations that threaten to reduce DDG's cost efficiency.

As illustrated by DDG's scenario planning, the operating environment is subject to sudden deterioration so contingency planning is essential. DDG's overall approach to risk assessment and risk management seems to be appropriate in the current context, with tax and custom clearance issues being the main threat to DDG's ability to operate efficiently.

5.8 GENDER EQUALITY

This evaluation looked at how DDG has mainstreamed gender, poverty alleviation, conflict sensitivity and how DDG Afghanistan's was using their Humanitarian Accountability Framework.

Initial findings from the MACCA gender baseline study that was going on simultaneously with this evaluation suggest that the concept of gender is still relatively new amongst most of their implementing partners and there is limited knowledge of relevant principles. DDG's approach to gender was favourably compared with its peers based on their efforts to maintain gender balanced MRE teams and approach to recruitment of female staff.

A review of DDG gender approaches⁵⁵, carried out in January 2010 prior to the start of the current project, found that DDG, in common with other MACCA implementing partners, had gaps in understanding how mine action affects women's rights to, and control over, resources. Mine action agencies lacked awareness of rights/control problems that are caused by mine clearance specific to women, men, boys and girls. DDG has since improved their gender approach in several ways and an assessment of how well they have performed, based on evaluation findings against benchmarks that they set for themselves in the current strategic plan, is below.

⁵⁵ Niras (2010)

Table 4 Assessment of Progress against DDG Afghanistan Strategic Objectives

Gender Objectives⁵⁶	Grade⁵⁷	Current Evaluation Findings
<i>Champion equal opportunities for women in our programmes, including integration into DDG's capacity building plan.</i>	A	Despite challenges of retaining female administrative staff and low numbers of women staff due to socio-cultural constraints, DDG has been proactively recruiting females and provides a good working environment where female staff are provided with relevant training and opportunities for professional development.
<i>Understand the different ways men and women experience the threat of mines and ERW, armed violence, under-development, rights abuses etc.</i>	B	Some disaggregated data is being collected during baseline and impact measurement activities that demonstrate different impacts. Findings are used to inform DDG annual planning exercise, but there is relatively little evidence of use of data for gender analysis. Variable levels of gender awareness demonstrated by DDG staff.
<i>Extend genuine participation to female stakeholders and beneficiaries</i>	C	Gender balanced MRE teams and relevant data collection systems help in better understanding female perspectives, but influence of females in decision-making is marginal due to socio-cultural barriers and the short-term nature of DDG interventions. DDG has no links with other actors who could engage in longer term work to address structural issues.
<i>Overtly address gender in all stages of the project cycle.</i>	B	DDG has developed systems to better understand different perspectives and impacts on men, women, boys and girls but could improve their analysis and use of results.

5.8.1 Women Staff in DDG

The proportion of women staff within DDG is currently only around 2% of the total staffing, but this is actually considerably better relative to its peers. A baseline analysis carried out in May 2013 by GICHD found a total of only 79 women working in mine action out of some 12,000 staff (0.66% of the total)⁵⁸. Due to cultural

⁵⁶ DDG Afghanistan (2012). Objectives are extracted from DDG Afghanistan's Country Strategy and Accountability Plan for 2013-2015.

⁵⁷ Grading system is based on the findings in this evaluation and uses the results of DDG's 2010 gender review as a baseline. Grading system is **A**: good progress, **B**: progress has been made, but there is still room for improvement, **C**: little evidence of improvement.

⁵⁸ Preliminary results pending finalisation of GICHD's report in mid-2013.

constraints, females do not work in demining teams anywhere in Afghanistan but work in either office positions (administration, finance or cleaners) or as part of a gender-balanced MRE team together with a male relative.

Key informant interviews with female staff indicate that DDG provides a good working environment where women are provided with relevant training and opportunities for professional development. The main complaint heard from female administrative staff about their working conditions was that they would like to have an opportunity to visit the field to see DDG's work first-hand.

DDG nevertheless faces challenges in retaining national female office staff since, once they marry, they leave their jobs. Female staff retention is much better for the MRE teams that are composed of male-female relatives and the main reason for the decline in the number of female staff in 2013 has been the reduction in the number of these teams as project funding has declined.

Table 5 DDG Staffing Gender Balance: Oct 2010 - April 2013⁵⁹

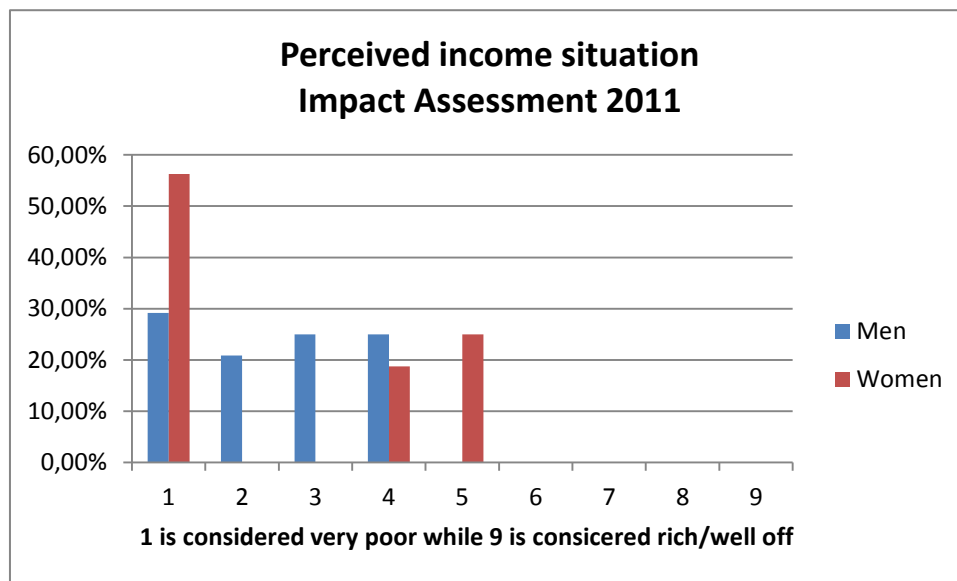
Date	Total Staff	Male	Female
Oct 2010	783	756	16
Oct 2011	839	806	18
Apr 2013	369	355	7

DDG has done gender awareness training for their staff in the past, but observations and interviews suggest that there is room for improvement in gender awareness amongst DDG staff.

5.8.2 Gender Equality Programming

Since the 2010 review, DDG has since improved their systems (including adapting focus groups discussions and interviewing methodologies) to collect disaggregated data results that could be used to inform a gender sensitive analysis. While DDG reportedly uses gender data in impact measurement reports during their annual planning exercise, the evaluation team found little evidence that collected data is being analysed or used. As noted in the Impact section above, reports tend to be descriptive, with relatively little in the way of analysis and actionable recommendations. The example below, from a report for Samangan Province, illustrates this. Although there is an apparent difference between male and female perceptions, the underlying causes and implications could not be explained.

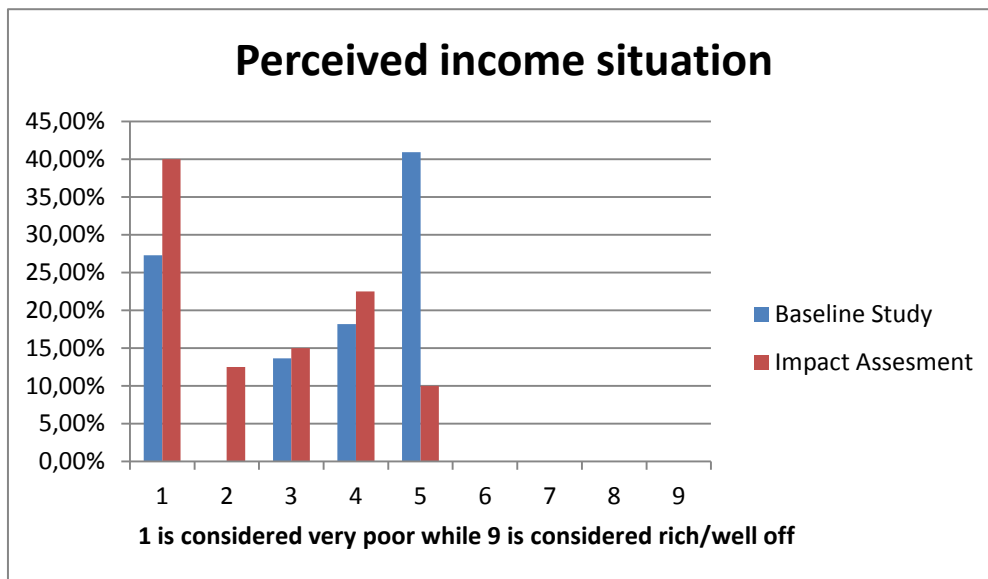
⁵⁹ Source: DDG Reports for the Ministry of the Economy.

Figure 12 Self-perception of Income Situation⁶⁰

5.9 POVERTY ALLEVIATION

DDG mainly relies on beneficiary self-assessments of their income situation during baseline surveys and during post-intervention impact measurement and does not measure assets. This may account for the apparent contradictions between results that indicate improved food security and income generation (as illustrated in Figure 11 above) and the more negative income self-assessment – below – from an intervention from Samangan Province, which paints a decidedly more negative picture. As with the example in the gender section above, DDG has not deepened the analysis further so the underlying reasons are not clear. It may also be an outlier since comparable data was not available for Bakhil Province. Based on observations during the field visit and a review of DDG monitoring reports, this apparent discrepancy is probably due to methodological factors, i.e. the findings that indicate that the removal of hazards from land does not usually translate into full productivity or increase in income, along with other external factors that affect income.

⁶⁰ Source: DDG Impact Monitoring Report Afghanistan, Samangan Province, Khurum Wa Sarbagh District, Now Abad village. April 2011.

Figure 13 Baseline vs. Post-Intervention Comparison of Perceived Income⁶¹

5.10 HUMANITARIAN ACCOUNTABILITY

DDG Afghanistan has had a HAF in place since 2011 but, based on interviews, there appears to be little staff awareness about the HAF. This was particularly noticeable amongst national staff, none of whom seemed to have ever seen it. The HAF does not appear to be either incorporated into DDG staff orientation or in training curricula. At the same time, it is clear that DDG does demonstrate humanitarian accountability approaches in several respects. During site visits, DDG was observed to place considerable emphasis on gaining the respect and trust of the local communities and, indeed, DDG was one of two demining agencies that were identified in a 2012 review as leading efforts to shift from disseminating messages (i.e. one-way communication) to using more participatory approaches by developing community liaison and volunteer networks⁶². DDG Afghanistan thus appears to be fulfilling many of its HAF commitments, although some gaps remain. For example, DDG does not yet have a complaints system in place for recording and follow-up on feedback that is received, directly or indirectly, from communities.

⁶¹ Source: DDG Impact Monitoring Report Afghanistan, Samangan Province, Khurum Wa Sarbagh District, Now Abad village. April 2011.

⁶² Samuel Hall Consulting (2012)

5.11 CONFLICT SENSITIVITY

As described in the Risk Management section above, DDG gives considerable weight to developing and maintaining good community-level relationships and networks. Like many other agencies in Afghanistan, DDG does not use formal conflict analysis frameworks and tools, but instead mainly relies on senior national staff to monitor community feedback and provide appropriate advice to management on approaches. A number of good practice examples by DDG, relevant to conflict sensitivity, were observed, including:

- Willingness to invest time in community consultations at all levels (men, women, boys and girls) to build trust, keep lines of communication open and understand priority needs and concerns;
- Applying “do no harm” approaches. For example, making efforts to ensure that local communities feel that they benefit from interventions, including recruiting and training staff from the northern region and undertaking local procurement when feasible⁶³.
- Ensuring that interventions are relevant and of good quality by measuring impact through tracking community perceptions.

Having achieved a good level of acceptance, the evaluation team agreed with senior DDG management that there was scope to increase involvement in armed violence reduction activities such as livelihood support, promote peaceful co-existence and facilitate community safety approaches.

⁶³ Examples were heard of peer agencies having their operations blocked by local communities since they only employed outsiders.

6 Conclusions

DDG has largely met – and, in terms of area, has cleared or even surpassed – their project objectives in terms of mine clearance and has thus made a significant positive contribution towards meeting commitments under the Ottawa Convention. The only noteworthy area where DDG was seen to have fallen short on objectives specific to this project is with the nationalisation of staff positions.

DDG is known in Afghanistan for its commitment, flexibility, transparency, quality, and willingness to coordinate. At the same time, the operating environment for mine action agencies in the country has changed significantly over the past few years and, for DDG to continue to remain relevant, it will not only be important for them to increase their cost-effectiveness but also to find a clear niche that adds value in an increasingly competitive arena. One potential niche is to link more systematically with development actors. While such a link would logically be with DRC, the core of DRC's programme (providing logistics support as one of UNHCR's implementing partner) in the Kabul area means that there is little overlap, either geographically, programmatically or strategically, with DDG's current focus.

If DDG decides to fill such a niche, this will require either significantly more programmatic alignment of DRC with DDG, or DDG will need to choose an alternative partner with whom to work on recovery programming in areas where they choose to work. Remaining hazards to be cleared are a combination of highland areas (which may or may not be located in the vicinity of communities) or in remote areas. Some NGOs have already started working in some of the communities⁶⁴ where DDG has completed tasks and there appears to be untapped value added for mine action agencies in terms of assessing needs and promoting the engagement of development actors at an early stage. Mine action agencies are obliged to invest time and resources in developing relationships and trust with communities, and it would seem that these investments could be put to better use in improving impact and sustainability, particularly for remote communities where development actors will face challenges in building relationships at a community level, due to the socio-cultural context.

⁶⁴ As an example, although the community adjacent to "Task 3" that was visited by the team was able to now cultivate a former battle area, grazing activities were still restricted by mines in the surrounding hills (which they had marked themselves as hazards). Two international NGOs, CARE International and ACTED, had carried out activities during the past year. This community is not a remote area; it is only 5 km from the outskirts of Mazar-e-Sherif.

Much of the motivation around setting targets for the nationalisation of a number of DDG senior staff positions stemmed from the desire to promote national ownership. However, accelerating this process has not only become critical from a cost-efficiency standpoint, but also because there are clear signs within the government of a decreased tolerance for “money tides”, which have been witnessed over the past decade, of funds flowing into Afghanistan and then flowing out again as relatively well-paid international agency staff (and private contractors) come and go. Fast-tracking nationalisation processes should be accompanied by training on gender approaches and compliance with DDG’s Humanitarian Accountability Framework.

There is also an assumption that trained staff who subsequently leave DDG will be in a better position for future employment. There is currently no tracking of the staff who have left DDG to help us gain an understanding of whether this objective has been achieved. It may be possible to facilitate links between staff who leave DDG and vocational training institutes or apprenticeship programmes to increase their chances.

At the moment, DDG’s impact measurement results are not sufficiently analysed or shared, even internally with their staff in the form of lessons learned. DDG is well-positioned (potentially together with DRC or other agencies involved in recovery and development work) to utilise impact measurement approaches in order to support a more proactive and targeted approach, and facilitate the engagement of development actors and their donors. With better linkages to development, task selection could potentially be more strategic and not only add value through improving the impact and sustainability of mine action interventions, but also help DDG be more cost-efficient. Facilitating a longer-term engagement with communities by other actors would make DDG’s gender equality programming objectives for beneficiary communities achievable, which does not currently appear to be the case. DDG also needs to extend its impact measurement to its training to be in a position to better understand how learning is being applied, and adjust accordingly to maximise the value-added of training being provided.

Sida is supporting several development programmes in the region where DDG has been operating, but links between DDG and agencies working outside of mine action are relatively weak.

7 Recommendations

Recommendations that are targeted at DDG and Sida are listed below. A top priority for DDG will be to adapt to (and anticipate) the changing operating context in Afghanistan and implement cost efficiencies and identify a clear niche where DDG can add value.

7.1.1 Recommendations to DDG

1. Due to the changed operating context, i.e. a more competitive environment along with an increased focus given to development activities by authorities and donors, DDG will need to make significant changes in its strategy and business model if it is to continue to add value in Afghanistan. It is suggested that DDG do this by:
 - Identifying a clear niche where DDG can add the most value and revise their strategy, in consultation with MACCA and DMC and other key actors. This niche would draw upon DDG's strengths; their international capacities, gender approach, experience with armed violence reduction and link with development.
 - Using the revised strategy and supporting funding to proactively select tasks that seek to maximise impact, while increasing cost-efficiency. One potential niche could take the form of a partnership with DRC or other like-minded agency that is implementing recovery projects. If DDG chooses to increase its focus on gender equality programming, an international or national partner should be identified that focuses on gender equality programming.
2. With a donor funding base that has decreased significantly during the past year, DDG's current structures in Kabul and in Mezar have a high level of support and office staff in relation to operational demining teams. The current structure is too small and resource heavy, utilising at least two vehicles, two drivers, and one medic to support relatively small demining teams of five persons. Unless DDG is able to return to previous budget levels, it will be necessary to increase cost efficiencies through:
 - Accelerating the process of nationalisation of DDG staff positions, supported by relevant training and coaching. Emphasise management training.
 - Reducing the number of management and programme support positions by integrating as much as possible into DRC's structure. In principle, DDG's staffing in Kabul could be reduced to a programme manager and operations manager with all other functions (finance, administration,

- human resources, logistics, etc.) being absorbed by DRC, whose budget is currently growing fairly rapidly.
- Clearance Section (Team) structure: creating larger clearance sections can reduce the vehicle requirements to two vehicles, two drivers, and one or two medics for 15-20 deminers. This will increase production and reduce the cost per square metre. For smaller tasks, DDG have some additional vehicle capacity that can be reallocated as required.
 - Owning a large and ageing vehicle fleet can become costly and has associated management burdens. Recommendations - consider leasing team vehicles and only retain key units, such as the ambulances, to ensure reliability and standards.
3. Continue to improve impact measurement result systems, analysis, reporting and communication of results by:
 - Increasing the capacities of MRE teams and Impact Measurement staff to analyse and communicate results so that they can include more analysis, including specific gender analysis, in reports along with actionable recommendations targeted at specific stakeholders.
 - Promoting engagement by development actors in areas where DDG is working through, for example, the undertaking of joint baseline and impact measurement activities.
 - Developing a DDG advocacy and communication strategy for Impact Measurement.
 - Extending impact measurement to not only capture the results of mine action activities, but also those from training activities. Make use of results to improve the effectiveness of training and other capacity building activities.
 4. Promote gender awareness and the use of relevant tools amongst DDG staff so that managers are able to carry out gender analyses and mainstream gender to ensure results.
 5. Review, and revise as appropriate, DDG's Humanitarian Accountability Framework for Afghanistan using the opportunity to increase awareness amongst staff so that it more effectively fulfils its function as a key reference point for understanding that which DDG Afghanistan has committed to. Develop a plan of action for a phased implementation of the HAF.
 6. Develop networks with vocational and/or professional training institutions to help facilitate the transition for national staff whose positions are cut (prioritising long-term staff).

7.1.2 Recommendations to Sida

7. Continued support to DDG in Afghanistan should be conditionally based on a revised DDG strategy and niche business model that is consistent with

Sweden's priorities in Afghanistan and adds clear value in the changing operating conditions /environment in Afghanistan. This will mean positioning mine action into the broader context so that it can be used as an entry point to support stabilisation and recovery efforts rather than as an end in itself.

8. Facilitate DDG linkages with relevant development activities and actors. This could take the form of supporting a workshop in Mazar-e-Sherif that brings together selected development agencies and mine action actors.

7.1.3 Recommendations to Sida and DDG jointly

9. Conduct consultations around the annual project review at the country level that are timed with a country visit by the Sida Programme Manager and DDG Desk Officer for Afghanistan at HQ.⁶⁵

⁶⁵ This should preferably be included as a provision in the relevant contract.

Annex 1 - Terms of Reference

Review of the *DDG Humanitarian Mine Action support to the National Strategy through clearance and enhanced quality project in Afghanistan* October 2010 – September 2013

1. Objective of the Review

These Terms of Reference describe the frames for a review of the Sida-supported Danish Demining Group (DDG) project in Afghanistan DDG Humanitarian Mine Action support to the National Strategy through clearance and enhanced quality 2010-2013.

The review will provide Sida with information regarding the current state of the project, take stock of results achieved, highlight lessons learned and provide recommendations to DDG and Sida regarding future cooperation.

2. Background

Sida has supported DDG in Afghanistan since the 1990s. The current phase of support 2010-2013 is based on DDG's proposal DDG Humanitarian Mine Action support to the National Strategy through clearance enhanced quality. The level of funding for the project is 15 MSEK per year, it total 45 MSEK.

The overall objective of DDG in Afghanistan is *to assist the Government of Afghanistan, the Mine Action Programme Afghanistan (MAPA) and the United Nations Mine Action centre Afghanistan (MACCA) in achieving the aims of the Afghanistan Compact and compliance with the Ottawa Convention*.

In order to achieve this objective, the DDG project proposal outlines three main outputs for the Sida-funded project: a) *Targeted clearance of landmines and ERW*; b) *Capacity building of indigenous staff*; c) *Provision of Mine Risk Education*. The project targets mine-affected populations in the North Regions of Afghanistan – the provinces of Balkh, Samangan, Sare Pul, Jawzjan and Faryab.

3. Scope of the Assignment

The review shall focus on the following issues:

a) Effectiveness

Has the project achieved its objectives, as stated in the project document? Examples of concrete results shall be highlighted as well as where concrete results are absent. In both cases explanations should be sought and analysed. The relation between risk analysis, risk management and results achieved shall be highlighted in this context.

b) Impact

What effects – intended and unintended, positive and negative – can be attributed to the project? What do the beneficiaries – direct and indirect – perceive to be the effects? Could the project be complemented with other development interventions for increased effect? Has DDG been able to contribute to development/changes also in the wide mine action sector (e.g. regarding coordination, strengthening of gender perspective etc.)?

c) Relevance

Has the project and its activities been designed and implemented in alignment with Sida's policies, national priorities, the needs and priorities of beneficiaries and donor agreements? Special consideration should be given to DDG's internal monitoring as well as to DDG's relation to MACCA and other national frameworks.

d) Sustainability

Are requirements of local ownership sufficient? What is the likelihood that the benefits of the project – especially its training components – can be sustained over time?

e) Efficiency

Can the costs of the project be justified by its actual results, taking relevant alternatives into account? How does DDG compare with other similar organisations, if any, working in Afghanistan? Have sufficient measures been taken to ensure that resources are efficiently used? Could the project have been implemented with fewer resources without reducing the quality and quantity of the results?

The distinction between humanitarian mine action and the development aspects of the project needs to be kept in mind during the review.

Throughout the review and in the report, special attention shall be given to how gender, poverty and conflict sensitivity perspectives have been integrated in planning, implementation and reporting.

4. Methodology**a) General**

In order to carry out the review the consultant shall:

- Assess project related documents, periodic reports to Sida and other relevant written documentation;
- Produce an inception report, based on this ToR and a desk review of the written documentation, outlining the task and an initial assessment of the relevant issues;
- Interview relevant stakeholders, including but not limited to Sida staff, DDG staff, representatives of MAPA/MACCA and representatives of local communities (direct beneficiaries).

The assignment includes a field visit to Afghanistan (Kabul and the North provinces) with visits to previous and current project sites as well as visits to DDG offices in Mazar-e Sharif and Kabul.

b) Written sources

- DDG project document *DDG Humanitarian Mine Action support to the National Strategy through clearance and enhanced quality 2010-2013.*
- Sida project assessment memo dated 21/10 2010
- Sida-DDG agreement signed 17/11 2010, with amendments
- Project budget, including revisions
- Work plans
- Periodical reports including audits
- DDG Impact Monitoring Manual
- Impact Assessment reports
- Previous evaluations/reviews of DDG in Afghanistan
- DDG Gender Field Study (2010)
- DDG Socio-economic study (2011)
- Any other relevant documentation as suggested by DDG, Sida or the consultant.

5. Review Team

The members of the review team must not have been directly involved in the DDG Afghanistan programmes in any way. If there may be any issue with regard to impartiality and conflict of interest, the consultant should clearly state so in the submitted proposal.

The review team shall be constructed to have a solid set of qualifications of Monitoring and Evaluation and experience in reviews and evaluations, including interview skills. In addition, the team shall have the following capacity:

- Strong Mine Action (MA) knowledge
- Experience in measure/value MA against socio-economic and broader context issues
- Experience in evaluation/review of capacity building interventions
- Analytical skills
- Strong ability related to cultural, political and gender sensitivity
- Excellent English
- Ability to conduct interviews in local language, either by the consultant or through the use of interpreters with strong interview experience
- Strong writing, communication and facilitation skills

Preferably, Afghan expertise should be included in the team. The team shall consist of both men and women for complete access to the stakeholders.

6. Budget and outline of work

The supplier shall provide Sida with a budget proposal in which all costs for conducting the evaluation are stated.

The consultants should prepare a proposal (incl. CV) indicating what approach and methodology they intend to use for the assignment, together with a work plan of activities, a time plan, as well as budget, including proposed daily fee rate and reimbursable expenses.

The evaluation is expected to take place between April and June 2013.

7. Reporting

An inception report shall be submitted to Sida and DDG one week after signing of the contract. The inception report, not more than six pages, shall clearly state the purpose and methodology of the evaluation as interpreted by the evaluation team; how the evaluation and the field work will be pursued and present preliminary findings based on the desk study. Furthermore should the inception report present an approach and methodology, including detailed description of the methodology, research strategy, and analytical approach specifying how the analysis will be performed. Sida and DDG will have the opportunity to comment on the inception report within one week.

The review team shall submit a draft review report to Sida and DDG not later than four weeks before deadline for the final report. Stakeholder feedback and comments shall be collected during the following two weeks.

The final report shall be in English and maximum 30 pages, including an executive summary but excluding attachments. The report shall be analytical in approach; present an assessment of results and lessons learnt; and include conclusions and recommendations to Sida and DDG. When the final report is approved, the executive summary shall be translated into Dari by the supplier. After the final report has been approved, the lead consultant shall present the review and its findings to Sida and DDG in a workshop in Stockholm.

The review shall adhere to the OECD/DAC Glossary on Evaluation and Results-based Management, including the OECD/DAC evaluation criteria for Conflict prevention and Peace building activities and Humanitarian assistance in complex emergencies, respectively.

8. Contact

Contact person as Sida is Maria Bjernevi, email: maria.bjernevi@sida.se

Annex 2 - Inception Report

1. Introduction

This inception report outlines the evaluation team's understanding of the assignment based on the ToR and subsequent document research and discussions during the inception phase of the evaluation. It lays out a proposed action plan (methods, schedule and timeline) for conducting the implementation of the evaluation.

2. Purpose, Use, Scope, Timeframe & Target Audience

2.1 Purpose & Use

According to the objectives described in the ToR, this will be an external review that takes place less than half a year before the end of the current project. The timing of this review will thus allow Sida to do a stock-take of the Danish Demining Group's (DDG) project in Afghanistan through assessing achievements, highlight lessons learned and recommendations to DDG and Sida regarding future cooperation. The review will be based on the OECD/DAC criteria and aim to measure effectiveness (including risk management aspects), impact (including outcomes such as DDG's contribution to the wider mine action sector), relevance (including alignment with national frameworks and relevant Sida's policies and priorities), sustainability (including the extent of local ownership), and efficiency (including cost-efficiency analyses). It will also assess how specific cross-cutting issues, namely gender, poverty and conflict sensitivity have been incorporated into various stages of the project cycle.

Based on the initial discussions with Sida representatives and DDG staff, both in Afghanistan and at a global level, it is evident that this review represents a good opportunity for both Sida and DDG to review progress made in relation to project objectives, capture lessons learned, identify critical gaps, and determine the most appropriate course of action for future collaboration that will have a greater focus on outcomes and longer impact.

2.2 Scope

This external review will be directed towards learning and accountability. While Sida has supported DDG operations in Afghanistan for over a decade, this study will focus on the current project, which was launched in 2010.

2.3 Target Audience & Stakeholder Analysis

The primary intended users of the results of this study are Sida and DDG staff both in Afghanistan and at a HQ level.

Stakeholder	Relationship	Assumed interest in the Study
Sida	Sida has funded DDG's activities in Afghanistan for a number of years.	One of two primary stakeholders for this study. Interested in learning emerging from this study at both a strategic and operational level and using the results to inform future collaboration.
DDG Afghanistan	Sida is one of DDG Afghanistan's two major donors.	One of two primary stakeholders for this study. Interested in the study for learning and informing the design of future programming. Interested in advice to improve impact measurement systems.
DDG HQ	Sida is an important partner.	Afghanistan is one of DDG's largest programmes with the potential to generate valuable learning that can potentially be useful in other contexts.
Swedish Ministry of Foreign Affairs	Guides Sida in implementation of Sweden's aid policies.	Afghanistan is of interest strategically and as a major recipient of support.
MACCA/MAPA	DDG is one of the 30 member agencies of MAPA and is the main link with the national government.	Dissemination of lessons learned. Reinforce reporting credibility.
Non-state armed actors	Determine DDG access.	Unknown.
Peer agencies	Coordinate and cooperate with DDG.	Dissemination of lessons learned.
Affected communities, including direct beneficiaries	Ultimate beneficiaries of DDG operations. Most are likely to have some understanding of DDG activities.	Likely to have different types of values and expectations relative to other stakeholders.

3. Sweden's Position on Mine-Action

Sweden's position⁶⁶ on the Ottawa convention⁶⁷ is to promote compliance and effective implementation of the convention. Since 2002 Sida's policy for support to

⁶⁶ Sida (2010) Mine Action Brief

Mine Operations has emphasised the integration of mine action programmes in development cooperation (i.e. a long-term perspective), and that mine programmes become integrated as far as possible in existing national structures and development plans which emphasise the importance of exit strategies. The key reference for this evaluation will be Sweden's *Peace and Security for Development Policy for Security and Development In Swedish Development Cooperation 2010–2014*⁶⁸, which was published in 2010.

4. Sida's Involvement with DDG

The Swedish government has had a long-standing relationship with DDG in three other countries apart from Afghanistan, namely Somalia, Sudan and Iraq. Sida is currently supporting a three-year project, due to end in September 2013, with a total budget of 45 MSEK in support of a project with three components, of which one is the release of previously suspected grounds⁶⁹ and the other two are related to training.. Sida's assessment of the project⁷⁰ found DDG to be effective, relevant, cost-efficient and acknowledged that DDG was making progress on measuring impact, which was a gap that was highlighted in Sida's 2010 global review of mine action.⁷¹

5. DDG Background

Danish Demining Group is a Humanitarian Mine Action and Armed Violence Reduction Unit in the Danish Refugee Council (DRC). DRC is a non-profit organisation that works worldwide to help and protect refugees, internally displaced and other conflict-affected persons.

The DDG mission is to recreate a safe environment where people can live without the threat of landmines, unexploded ordnance and small arms and light weapons. They work to achieve this through Humanitarian Mine Action activities, focusing on landmines and explosive remnants of war, as well as Armed Violence Reduction programmes that address both physical and mental aspects of the threat that small arms and explosive remnants of war pose to the recreation of a safe environment as a starting point for development.

DDG operates with three strategic objectives that define the fundamental and specific aims of their operations:

⁶⁷ <http://www.icbl.org/index.php/icbl/Treaty/MBT/Treaty-Text-in-Many-Languages/English>

⁶⁸ <http://www.government.se/sb/d/3365/a/164585>

⁶⁹ A total 1,485,000 m² was planned

⁷⁰ Sida Final Assessment Memo on the proposal to Support to Danish Demining Group Mine Action Programme in Afghanistan 2010-2013

⁷¹ Sida (2010) Review of Sida's Support to Mine Action 2001-2009

- Enhance Human Security by clearing landmines and unexploded ordnance, reducing the threat from small arms & light weapons and providing risk education and raising awareness
- Provide impact-oriented, cost-effective and innovative solutions in close cooperation with relevant stakeholders
- Support local structures and institutions in finding sustainable solutions to residual problems in a manner that enables economic and social development

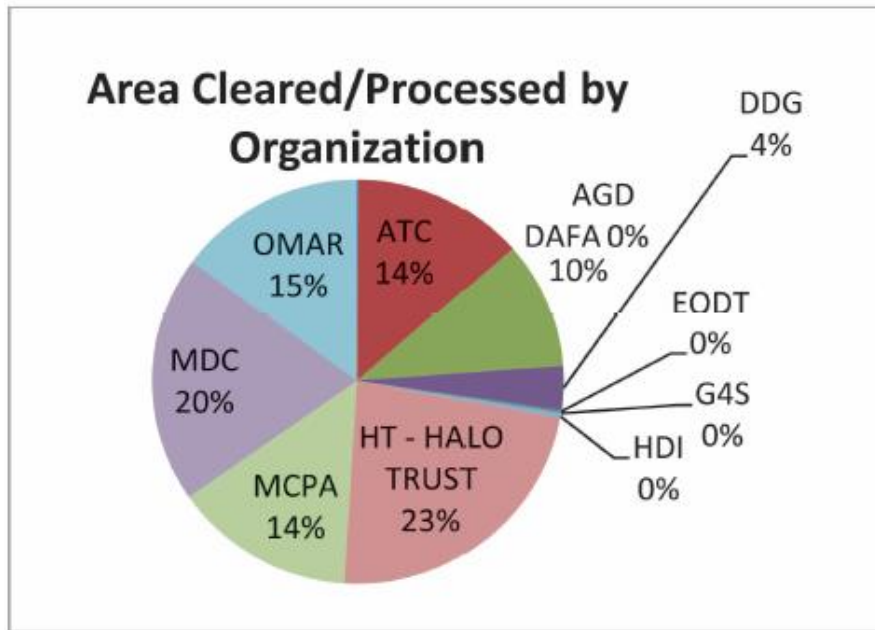
DDG has operated in Afghanistan since 1999, where they have recovered and disposed of up to 33,000 landmines and 1.3 million pieces of unexploded ordnances. The beneficiaries of these years of operation include recently returned refugees from Iran and Pakistan, vulnerable rural populations of Afghanistan and the wider humanitarian and development community.

When Sida signed the current agreement in 2010, DDG's total annual budget amounted to some 70 MSEK with different components being financed by a variety of donors including UNOPS, Denmark, Netherlands, Germany, Japan and Canada. DDG's budget has been reduced so that Sweden's contribution now amounts to some 60% of DDG's total programme resources.

6. Afghanistan Government & Mine Action

In 2002 the Government of Afghanistan entrusted interim responsibility for mine action to the United Nations, via a coordination body managed by the United Nations Mine Action Service (UNMAS). In January 2008, through the modality of an Inter-Ministerial Board for Mine Action, the Government designated the Department of Mine Clearance under the Afghan National Disaster Management Authority to work jointly with the UN coordination body, the Mine Action Coordinating Committee for Afghanistan (MACCA). DMC and MACCA are jointly responsible for the coordination of all mine action activities in Afghanistan.

DDG is one of the implementing partners of the Mine Action Programme of Afghanistan (MAPA), which is one of the largest mine action programmes in the world. MAPA is one of the largest 'humanitarian' (i.e. non-military) mine action programme in the world and encompasses all pillars of mine action: advocacy, demining, stockpile destruction, mine risk education, and victim assistance.

Figure 1. Area Cleared by Organisation⁷²

7. Sida-Funded DDG Project Summary

The original goal of the DDG project was to assist the Government of Afghanistan, the MAPA and the United Nations Mine Action Centre Afghanistan, UNMACCA, in achieving the aims of the Afghanistan Compact and in compliance with the Ottawa Convention. The project was designed to include:

- Clearance of landmines and ERW,
- Capacity building of national staff and
- Provision of Mines Risk Education (MRE)

The target group was the mine-affected populations in the Central and North regions of Afghanistan, including the provinces of Balkh, Samangan, Sare-Pol and Jowzjan within the Swedish PRT (Provincial Reconstruction Team, Swedish military responsibility area).

Expected outputs were:

- 1 495 000 m2 of contaminated land released through clearance
- Increased involvement of local staff in the management of DDG activities through continued capacity building
- Operational output levels are maintained through the involvement of the Programme Training Cell

⁷² MAPA (2012) MAPA Annual Report 1390 http://www.macca.org.af/en/MAPA_Reports.html

8. Limitations & Constraints

The evaluation team foresees the following limitations, which could affect the achievement of the ToR:

- Access to relevant data given the evolving information management systems and relatively high turnover of international staff in Afghanistan⁷³.
- Afghanistan has an unpredictable security environment that may require plans to be altered at the last minute. It is therefore proposed that contingency planning be done in the form of scenario-planning and pre-selection of alternative sites to be visited.
- Time and capacity constraints will both limit the coverage of review and have a bearing on how participatory a process this can be, given the transaction cost implications for both the stakeholders and the evaluation team.
- The challenges of measuring attribution and impact in post-conflict/humanitarian contexts are well-documented⁷⁴ and the multitude of actors (both inside and outside the humanitarian system) make a credible assessment of impact difficult to achieve. Demining should have a strong development component and DDG Afghanistan has been piloting these linkages with DRC-implemented longer-term interventions. Given the limited scope and time constraints, the ability of this review to measure impact will be mainly dependent on DDG's Afghanistan's existing capacity and systems for measuring impact and the ability of the review team to validate the quality of primary data that is used by DDG to assess impact.
- Assessment of sustainability will similarly be dependent on the availability of suitable data.
- Assessment of cost-efficiency will similarly be dependent on the availability of data, notably comparative data from peer agencies. During initial discussions, Sida agreed to request relevant data from DFID, which funds other mine action agencies.

9. Assessment of Scope

The evaluation team held preliminary discussions during meetings and individual interviews with staff from Sida, DDG Afghanistan and DDG HQ during the inception phase.

⁷³ Although it should be noted that DDG's Program Manager has been working in Afghanistan for the last 10 years.

⁷⁴ E.g. Hofmann, Charles-Antoine (2004) Measuring and analysing impact: methods, indicators and constraints. ODI <http://www.odi.org.uk/resources/docs/281.pdf>

The study team has so far reviewed around 20 documents, most of which were made available to them by the DDG and Sida focal points for this study. The main reference documents for this Inception Report include:

DDG	1. DDG (2011) Impact Monitoring Report Afghanistan 2. DDG Annual Workplans for 2011-2012 and 2012-2013 3. DDG (2012) Impact Measurement Manual 4. DDG (2012) Humanitarian Accountability Framework for Afghanistan 5. DDG Afghanistan (2010) Gender Field Study 6. DDG Afghanistan (2010) Proposal to Sida October 2010 - September 2013 7. GICHD (2009) Follow-Up Evaluation of the German-Funded Mine Action Teams of Danish Demining Group In the Balkh Province of Afghanistan
Sida	1. Sida (2010) Review of Sida's Support to Mine Action 2001-2009 2. Sida's Humanitarian Assistance Strategy 3. Sida (2010) Mine Action Brief 4. Sida Final Assessment Memo on the proposal to Support to Danish Demining Group Mine Action Programme in Afghanistan 2010-2013
Others	1. Mine Action Program of Afghanistan 1390 Annual Report 2. IMAS (2007) Guide for the evaluation of mine action interventions 3. IOD PARC (2012) Meta Evaluation of Mine Action and Development

Based on an initial scoping exercise using these sources, the team has been able to identify the areas that realistically can be focused on during this study and developed a detailed methodology that takes into account what was already proposed in the ToR.

10. Review of Scope

10.1 Key issues emerging from the inception work

- *Increasingly competitive operating environment* – the increasingly competitive environment within mine action agencies in Afghanistan is due to several factors, including decreased funding availability, an increasing emphasis by donors on cost efficiency criteria in deciding where to channel funding along with the phase of operations, when virtually all of the populated areas have been cleared and mine clearance activities have moved to more remote areas. According to DDG Afghanistan, budgets of most mine action agencies (including DDG⁷⁵) have been significantly reduced recently.

⁷⁵ Source: DDG Afghanistan. DDG's budget is 1/3 of what it was in comparison to last year and staff

- *Donor expectations about results-based reporting* – donors are pressing for better measurement of qualitative indicators to gauge outcomes along with more systematic analysis of quantitative data to understand overall trends.
- *Links between mine action and development are unclear* – a 2012 meta-evaluation of DFID-funded demining interventions⁷⁶ found that the linkages between Mine Action and Development are not well articulated or understood and agreed that there is no overarching Theory of Change.
- *Measurement of cost-efficiency* – the DFID meta-evaluation also discovered that there was no consistent methodology being used to measure Value for Money, due to the fact that valuation of efficiency, effectiveness and effect is complex with high level of non-monetarised values, including treaty obligations, in addition to different interpretations of evaluation criteria within the Mine Action sector and the development sector. This stock take will attempt to look at both aspects to capture relevant lessons learned.
- *DDG's emphasis on community-based approaches* – such approaches are often highlighted as good practice based on lessons-learned and DDG's own Humanitarian Accountability Framework, but such approaches have implications for the cost efficiency of DDG operations and their ability to demonstrate value for money.
- *Conflict sensitivity and risk management* – to operate efficiently and effectively, DDG needs to maintain an adequate level of conflict analysis and risk management capacities.

10.2 Issues the evaluation will take into account

The National Context:

- Transitional nature of the Afghanistan context.
- Emphasis on nationalisation and national ownership.

Swedish Government:

- Institutional priorities, processes and structures of Sida and the Ministry for Foreign Affairs (MFA).
- Increasing pressure to demonstrate evidence-based results and value-for-money.

DDG:

- DDG's current focus on improving impact measurement systems and responding more holistically to community needs by linking up demining activities with other sectoral interventions. DDG Afghanistan has provided

numbers have been reduced to 365 from approximately 800 a year ago.

⁷⁶ IOC PARC (2012)

some good practice examples in this area, namely the two DRC pilot projects supporting water supply and agriculture.

11. Methodology

11.1 Approach

This is an external review that will use evaluative approaches for learning and accountability. The methodology will include a desk review, semi-structured individual and group interviews. The methodology will be based on both inductive and deductive approaches using quantitative and qualitative data gathered from a selected range of sources as described below. To ensure data integrity and factual accuracy throughout the review process, the team will periodically compare, triangulate and analyse data that has been collected throughout the process.

Individual team members will be assigned focal point responsibilities for specific themes and issues to ensure an adequate coverage of documentation, analysis, documentation on key issues emerging from interviews and focus-group discussion while also creating periodic opportunities for validation by key stakeholders. Although evaluative methods will be employed to ensure an appropriate level of rigor and credibility, at the same time, a specific emphasis will be given to maximising learning and utilisation of results for key stakeholders in DDG and Sida.

Field and HQ interviews will allow the team to gather different perspectives from both selected donors with significant involvement in mine action (Danida, DFID, US COM), peer mine action agencies, and agencies involved in development activities such as DRC, local authorities and the affected population, men as well as women. During the execution of this evaluation, it will be important to be conscious that DDG, both in Afghanistan and at a global level, sees this exercise as a good opportunity to improve their accountability systems and advance their learning regarding impact measurement.

11.2 Gender Analysis

The evaluation will assess if gender has been mainstreamed into the programme's implementation and, if possible, whether or not the programme has contributed to improving gender equality. This will be done by taking the gender structures and norms of the mine-affected communities and how these play out in the approaches that DDG employ when carrying out their activities into account (e.g. access to and involvement of women during different stages of the project cycle). The team will interview male and female leaders who are involved in the decision-making process regarding mine action activities and organise separate focus group discussions with men and women of different ages and backgrounds with specific questions to understand the impact of mines and Explosive Remnants of War (ERW) on women's and girls' daily lives, and to obtain gender-specific information on the attitudes, knowledge and practices, and socio-economic status of women in their communities. Data that has been collected shall be disaggregated by sex and age and analysed with a gender lens to provide a social analysis of the activities that put women, girls, boys and men at risk.

11.3 Assessing Impact

As described elsewhere, given the limited scope of this review our ability to assess impact will depend heavily on the quality and accessibility of relevant data. Based on preliminary research, DDG appears to have a good quality results framework along with a Humanitarian Accountability Framework that spells out their commitments to stakeholders, including beneficiaries. However, a 2010 Sida Review⁷⁷ found that agencies, including DDG, often claim to have effective impact monitoring systems in place when, more often than not, these are not strong. It will thus be important to prioritise the assessment of DDG's systems and reporting, in addition to drawing on the results of previous independent evaluations (notably the evaluation recently carried out by Danida). This will both enable the review team to gauge the quality and reliability of data generated by DDG and give more concrete recommendations for improving DDG systems.

11.4 Assessing Sustainability

In their proposal, DDG has explicitly linked sustainability with an exit strategy and put an emphasis on the training of DDG national staff to equip them to fill professional roles, both inside and outside the field of mine action. Sustainability is also implied in the overall project goal, in terms of contributing to achieving the aims of the Afghanistan Compact and compliance with the Ottawa Convention, Protocol V to the 1980 Weapons Convention and the Convention on Cluster Munitions.

11.5 Inception work

The evaluation has taken the following steps in researching, data collection, triangulation, analysis, validation and reporting:

- Briefing and scoping: Start-up meetings with Programme Staff in Sida's Conflict Department and DDG Afghanistan staff.
- Preliminary document research: a document review using both internal and external documents, correspondence, reports and relevant data, as well as policies and frameworks relevant to emergency response.
- Preliminary analysis of data gathered through the scoping process and preparation of this Inception Report, which will define the focus of this study.

11.6 Field Visits

During the start-up discussions with DDG and Sida representatives, it was agreed that selection criteria for site visits would include:

- Sites where there are on-going Sida-funded DDG Activities.

⁷⁷ Sida (2010) Review of Sida's Support to Mine Action 2001-2009

- Sites where Sida-funded DDG Activities have been completed (to facilitate an assessment of outcome/impacts).
- Satisfactory security risk assessment.
- Direct Access to male and female beneficiaries

Eight working days have been allocated in the workplan for the field visit. It is proposed to apply a 6-day working week for the review team during the field visits to ensure more effective use of time allocated for field visits without increasing costs. Based on this allocation, the following itinerary⁷⁸ has been agreed with DDG Afghanistan management to make the most use of the limited time available.

- 1½ - 2 days in Kabul for orientation meetings and preliminary data collection;
- 4-5 days based in northern Afghanistan for site visits, interviews with beneficiary communities and other interviews with key informants in Mazari Sharif⁷⁹.
- 2-3 days in Kabul for key informant interviews, visit to the training center, data collection/analysis and debriefing on preliminary findings and conclusions with DDG and Sida staff.

The evaluation team would collectively aim to interview 30-45 key informants in total, men and women, (not including beneficiary community members) during the study, including 5-6 HQ staff from Sida and DDG, 10-15 staff from DDG Afghanistan (international and national), Sida in Afghanistan, representatives of 2-3 other donors, 3-4 government representatives from MACCA/MAPA and districts, 7-8 staff from UNMAS and peer mine action implementing agencies and 304 “external experts” who have no direct stake in funding, coordinating or implementing mine operations. For site visits, it is envisaged to hold four gender-disaggregated community level focus group discussions, supplemented by 10-15 key informant interviews, targeting vulnerable groups as appropriate.

DDG has agreed to provide transportation for the evaluation team members in Kabul, Mazari Sharif and site visits in addition to appropriate advice regarding security and suitable accommodation in Kabul and Mazari Sharif.

⁷⁸ Subject to flight schedules, security clearance, etc.

⁷⁹ It is envisaged that one team member will return to Kabul after four days to continue with data collection in Kabul.

11.7 Roles and Responsibilities of Team Members

Team Leader	The Team Leader will be in charge of directing the process, including providing overall leadership in analysis and drafting of the inception and evaluation reports. He coordinates the work of the evaluation team, distributing tasks and ensuring that each member maximises their contributions to the evaluation in a timely fashion and will be the focal point for communications between Sida and DDG with the evaluation team. He will also be the thematic focal point for humanitarian issues, gender analysis, protection and conflict sensitivity.
Mine Action Specialist	Responsible for technical mine action elements of the evaluation (data collection, analysis, technical advice, technical review and support to other team members) and support with other data gathering and analysis activities.
National Consultants	The primary role of the national consultants will be to add value and depth to the country visits while also organising and managing country-level surveys. The female consultant will help ensure the team can fully benefit from women's perspectives. At the same time, their respective backgrounds and prior experience means that they will also be able contribute to the evaluation from their respective area of expertise, including governance and planning.

11.8 Interview Guides

A proposed interview guide based questions on the objectives in the ToR and initial scoping discussions with Sida and DDG staff are attached as an annex. An interview guide for community-level consultations is also attached. Four core issues, identified from a 2010 review of Sida-funded mine action activities, are useful to frame this review.

- **Prioritisation:** In light of the fact that mine clearance is a high-cost activity, it is relevant to see how land for clearance is selected and prioritised in relation to the degree of suspected mine and UXO contamination and in relation to socio-economic factors and developmental needs. Issues around land ownership and control of resources will an important consideration.
- **Methods and tools applied in mine action:** to what extent does DDG emphasise learning processes and apply latest tools and methodologies, such as the land release concept.
- **Degree of local involvement:** Active participation by beneficiaries in mine action activities is likely to establish local ownership and strengthen local capacity and the potential for sustainability.
- **Linkage to development activities:** While this appears in strategies and goals of most organisations that are involved in mine action, it often remains a good intention and only in a few cases has it been really implemented in the field. Adopting a developmental approach to mine action is a priority for Sida.
- The issue of development is, in our view, not about the “integration of mine action into development programmes” but rather about adopting a

developmental approach to mine action as such. We feel that there might be a difference in these two views that needs to be clarified.

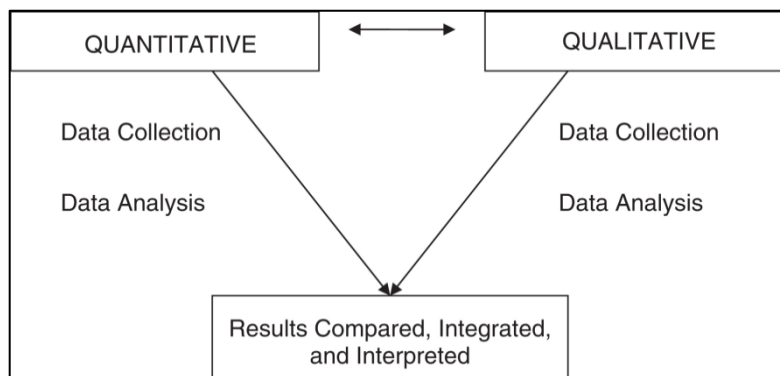
11.9 Data Analysis

The following steps will be undertaken to analyse the data collected in the field:

- Data analysis and preliminary findings; establishment of time lines to identify key events and key decision-making points.
- Triangulation of findings to determine high, medium and low levels of convergence.
- Before leaving Afghanistan, the review team will meet to compare and triangulate findings and conclusions.

11.10 Reporting and Validation of Findings and Recommendations

The evaluation team will employ a mixed-methods approach applying inductive and deductive approaches, using quantitative and qualitative data (as illustrated below) gathered from a purposely selected range of sources.



The following steps will be taken to validate and report the evaluation findings and conclusions:

- Debriefing session with DDG (and Sida) will be held at the end of the Afghanistan field visit to help validate main findings, support learning and participation.
- Preparation of first draft of the report, which will be revised based on feedback by key DDG and Sida stakeholders.
- Submission of final report.

11.11 Key methods, informants and sources of data

The data collection for this study will be mainly done through purposely selected key informant interviews (KIIs), document research, structured focus group discussions (including workshops) and observations during field visits as detailed out in Table 1 below. Due to time constraints, there will be a need to carefully select key informants for this study (both stakeholders and non-stakeholders) so as to provide a representative sample, with priority being to those stakeholders shown below.

- An appropriate sample of DDG Afghanistan and HQ staff.
- Other Swedish government stakeholders (MFA).
- Staff from mine-action coordinating agencies (e.g. MACCA).

- Relevant Afghan governmental bodies and local authorities.
- This being a learning exercise with a particular focus on looking beyond outputs, there is a need to ensure participation of concerned DDG staff at a HQ level, notably the desk officer, Impact Measurement Adviser.
- DRC staff, particularly those who have experience with collaboration in Afghanistan with DDG.
- Other major donors (Danida, DFID, US COM).
- Other relevant field level actors (WFP, UNICEF, MSF etc.).

Affected communities, including beneficiaries

11.12 Compensating for potential biases

During the orientation phase at the start of the field work, any potential biases of evaluation team members are raised so that they could be compensated for when planning interviews, conducting analysis, developing conclusions and recommendations to help ensure impartiality.

11.13 Document research

Document research is being carried out in three stages by the review team. During the inception phase key documents were reviewed supplemented by start up discussions with two Sida programme staff in Stockholm, Kabul-based DDG Programme Manager and Grants Manager and DDG's global Impact Measurement Adviser.

In the next stage, relevant data extracted from interviews and desk research will be collated and placed in an evidence matrix so as to organise the data based on lines of questioning. The evidence matrix tool will facilitate subsequent analysis of evidence collected to identify trends and areas of controversy. Frequencies of identified themes will be assessed using the evidence matrix. This will enable the significance and weight of the issue to be determined. Issues identified as potentially significant to conclusions will be correlated to the location and operational division from which these came. This will allow the review team to link people's perceptions of perceived success and hindering factors to specific areas in the organisation that will help reduce bias.

Each team member is assigned responsibility for specific themes based on their individual area of expertise to help ensure that specific issues are not overlooked.

11.14 Triangulation of data

Triangulation is a core principle in mixed-method data collection as it ensures that the results are linked up into a coherent and credible evidence base. This review will mainly rely on:

- Source triangulation. Evaluation team members will compare information from different sources, e.g. at different management levels and different functional units within DDG.
- Method triangulation. Team members will compare information collected by different methods, e.g. interviews, focus group discussion, document review.
- Research triangulation. Comparison and collation of information collected by different team members during the course of their research.

- Comparator agency triangulation. Contrast and compare the operations, technical support and cost structures of selected agencies.
- Context triangulation. The study will triangulate findings from different operational contexts. Non-stakeholder triangulation. Views of informed key experts who do not have a stake in the outcome of the evaluation are highly important, to ensure that external perspectives are taken into account.
- Data from each source can then be placed into the evaluation framework to assist in identifying key findings, conclusions and results.

11.15 Key Milestones for the Study⁸⁰

Milestone	Date(s)	Responsibility	Participants
Submission of inception Report	Friday, April 12	Indevelop	Sida & DDG Focal Points
Feedback on Inception Report	Wed, April 17	Sida & DDG Focal Points	Indevelop
If needed, revised Inception Report submitted for Sida's approval	Thurs, April 18	Indevelop Sida approves	Sida & DDG Focal Points
Field visit to Afghanistan (including international travel time)	Wed, May 1 – Friday, May 10	Review Team members	DDG Afghanistan & Sida Programme Officer
Site visits and interviews in Mazari Sharif, Balkh Province.	Friday, May 3 – Mon/Tue, May 6/7	Review Team members	DDG Afghanistan & Mazari-based Sida Prog Officer
Submission of Draft Report	Thurs, May 24	Indevelop	Sida & DDG Focal Points
Feedback provided on Draft Report	Thurs, May 30	DDG and Sida focal point	Indevelop
Submission of Final Report	Thurs, June 5	Indevelop	Sida and DDG
Final Report with Executive Summary in Dari	Mon, June 10	Indevelop	Sida and DDG
Presentation of the evaluation at Sida in Stockholm	June 11 or 12	Indevelop	Sida, MFA, DDG

⁸⁰ See also the attached workplan in the Annex

11.16 Potential risks for the study

Uncertain and insecure operational contexts: access and security in DDG operational areas, and Afghanistan in general, cannot be guaranteed. Planning for field visits will include contingency planning but there is always the risk that itineraries cannot be respected if, for example, security conditions advise against planned movements.

12. Deliverables

The review will generate the following outputs:

- **Reports:** A draft and a final version of the Inception Report and a Review Report with relevant annexes.
- **Feedback Process on Draft Report:** Sida and DDG will each be responsible for providing feedback on the Draft Report received from Indevelop.
- **The Final Evaluation Report:** will be submitted by Indevelop to Sida for final approval in consultation with DDG. Once approved, the report will be proof read and professionally laid out in accordance with Sida’s digital publication standards and their *Framework Agreement for Reviews and Evaluations*.
- **Presentation of the evaluation in Stockholm** for Sida, DDG, MFA and other invitees.

13. Report Outline

To ensure that the Evaluation Report directly addresses the objectives defined in the ToR, it is planned that the report will be structured according to the lines of questioning described in the Methodology Section (in line with Sida’s evaluation guidelines), i.e.:

• Title page • Table of contents • List of acronyms • Preface • Acknowledgements • Executive summary of 1000 to 1500 words
Main Report (it is anticipated that the entire report including the Front Section, will be no more than 30 pages of text excluding figures and annexes) • Introduction and Background ○ Purpose, scope, rationale, target audience and expected use of the evaluation ○ The Project: including a summary of DDG’s and Sida’s mission and activities in the mine action arena • Methodology, including a description of limitations and constraints • Description and assessment of DDG’s performance measurement systems. • Comparisons with other peer agencies who have comparable operational models. This section would include a broad agency “mapping” to situate DDG within the Afghanistan context. • Separate sections corresponding to specific question areas of the review, with relevant findings and conclusions as appropriate. Case studies may be used to illustrate specific findings.

○ Relevance ○ Effectiveness ○ Efficiency ○ Impact ○ Sustainability ● Conclusions (overall analysis and conclusions based on findings) ● Recommendations targeted specifically at Sida and DDG separately
Annexes: 1. ToR for the Review 2. Inception Report 3. Field visit itineraries 4. List of Persons Interviewed 5. List of Key Reference Documents

14. Measures of Success for this evaluation

The Evaluation Team proposes that the following criteria should be used to assess the overall quality and utility of the study process:

- Engage with an adequate number of staff within DDG and Sida and other key stakeholders during the data collection and analysis process in order to promote ownership and the utilisation of evaluation results.
- Generate robust findings that can be clearly linked to evidence through the quality-assurance process adopted (notably for findings where there are divergent views or are potentially sensitive).
- Based on specific questions outlined in the TOR, establish clear links between the study findings, conclusions and “SMART” recommendations targeted at specific stakeholder groups in DDG and Sida.
- Execute the above activities in an independent fashion, so as to ensure the credibility of the findings and recommendations while respecting relevant professional codes of conduct to gain the respect and confidence of the client and the partner agency.

Annex 3 – Key Informants

DDG Interviewees:

<i>Name</i>	<i>Org. and function</i>	♂♀	<i>Date</i>	<i>Location</i>	<i>Interviewer</i>
Mikkel Nedergaard	Impact Monitoring Adviser, DDG Copenhagen (by phone)	M	Wed 10 Apr	Vietnam (by phone)	JB
John Morse	Programme Manager	M	Wed 08 May	Kabul	JB & MB
[name protected]	Regional Manager	M	Sun 05 May	Mazar	JB & MB
[name protected]	Head of Training	M	Wed 08 May	Kabul	MB & SK
Anders Andersen	Grants Manager	M	Wed 08 May	Kabul	JB & MK
Mick Trant	Senior Technical Adviser	M	Sun 05 May	Mazar	MB & SK
Anne Danielsen	Finance & Administration	1 F 1M	Wed 08 May	Kabul	JB & MK
Ahmad Zia	Managers				
Roger Fasth	Technical Adviser	M	Wed 08 May	Kabul	MB & SK
[name protected]	Grants/IM Assistant	F	Thu 09 May	Kabul	MK
[name protected]	MRE/IM Coordinator	M	Tue 07 May	Kabul	JB
[name protected]	Head of Operations	M	Thu 09 May	Kabul	MB & MK
[name protected]	HR/Admin Assistant	F	Mon 06 May	Mazar	MB & SK
[name protected]	Accountant	F	Mon 06 May	Mazar	MB & SK

Other Interviewees:

<i>Surname, Forenames</i>	<i>Org. and function</i>	♂♀	<i>Date</i>	<i>Location</i>	<i>Interviewer</i>
Maria Bjernevi, Clara Korths	Development Analyst, Unit for Humanitarian Assistance Assistant Analyst, Sida HQ (Stockholm by phone)	F	Wed 10 Apr	Stockholm (by phone)	JB
Anders Öhrström, Maria Bjernevi, Marianne von Malmberg	Head of Dev Coop/Deputy HOM - Sida Afghanistan, Development Analyst, Programme Manager, Sida (Stockholm)	M + 2F	Thu 02 May	Kabul	JB/MB/SK/MK
Hoshang Schiwa	National Program Officer, Sida Mazar	M	Tue 07 May	Kabul	JB & MK
Michelle Bouchard	First Sec/Sr Dev Advisor, Sida	F	Sun 05 May	Mazar	JB & MB
Karma Jimba	Regional Programme Manager, UNOPS	M	Sun 05 May	Mazar	JB & MB
[name protected]	Chief of Operations, MACCA	M	Thu 02 May	Kabul	JB/MB/SK/MK

<i>Surname, Forenames</i>	<i>Org. and function</i>	<i>♂♀</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Location</i>	<i>Interviewer</i>
[name protected]	Programme Officer, MACCA	M	Thu 02 May	Kabul	JB/MB/SK/MK
[name protected]	Area Manager, AMAC North/MACCA	M	Mon 06 May	Mazar	JB & MB
[name protected]	Director, DMC	M	Wed 08 May	Kabul	MB & SK
[name protected]	Head of Sectoral Service, Balkh Province	M	Mon 06 May	Mazar	JB/MB/SK/MK
[name protected]	Advisor, Mine Action, Security and Development, GICHD, Geneva	F	Thu 25 Apr	Geneva	JB
Abigail Jones	Gender Advisor, GICHD, Geneva	F	Wed 08 May	Kabul	JB
Samuel Paunila	Advisor, Land Release and Operational Efficiency	M	Thu 25 Apr	Geneva	JB
Erick Gerstner	Livelihood Program Manager	M	Tue 07 May	Kabul	JB
Heather Blackwell	DRC Regional Director	F	Wed 08 May	Kabul	JB
Cecilia Ljungman	Team Member, 2003 DDG Global Evaluation for Danida	F	Wed 10 Apr	Kathmandu (by phone)	JB
Community Leaders	[name protected], Samangan Province	5 M	Sat 04 May	[name protected]	JB/SK/MB
Women and 3 children	[name protected], Samangan Province	8 F	Sat 04 May	[name protected]	MK
Team Leader ([name protected]) & Medic, Halo Trust	Ammunition Dump, [name protected], Samangan Province	2 M	Sun 05 May	[name protected]	JB/MB/SK/MK
Women (and 4 children)	[name protected], Khulm district, Balkh Province	5 F	Sun 05 May	[name protected]	MK
Community Leaders	[name protected], Khulm district, Balkh Province	2 M	Sun 05 May	[name protected]	JB/SK/MB
[names protected]	M&E Officer Community worker and social trainer Engineer, NSP Project CARE International	2 F/1 M	Mon 06 May	Mazar	MK
[name protected]	Communications Officer, Dept of Women's Affairs	M	Mon 06 May	Mazar	MK
[name protected]	Head of Dept of Women's Affairs	F	Wed 08 May	Kabul	MK
Chris Price	Demining Adviser, DFID Afghanistan	M	Thu 09 May	Kabul (by phone)	JB
[name protected]	[name protected]	M	Wed 08 May	Kabul	MB & SK
David True	HALO Afghanistan Operations Expatriate	M	Thu 09 May	Kabul	MB & SK

Annex 4 – Key Reference Documents

DDG and DRC
DDG Afghanistan Annual Workplans 2010-2013
DDG Afghanistan (2011) Impact Monitoring Report for Samangan Province, Khurum Wa Sarbagh District, Now Abad village
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Government of Sweden (2010) Policy For Security and Development in Swedish Development Cooperation 2010–2014.
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DFID (2013) Project Summary: Clearance of mines and Unexploded Ordinance in Herat Province 2013-2018
Food Security and Agriculture Cluster (2013) Gender Equality: Policies and Practices in Afghanistan. http://afg.humanitarianresponse.info/sites/default/files/gender%20equality_FSAC_study_FINAL_SC_March13.pdf
GICHD (2012) Land Rights & Mine Action in Afghanistan FAQ.

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Paterson, T., Paktian, F. and Fryer, W. (2008) Afghanistan Country Mission Report Evaluation Of EC Mine Action: Caucasus-Central Asia Region http://eeas.europa.eu/anti_landmines/docs/0908_afghan_mission_report_en.pdf
MACCA (2010) Balanced Scorecard Overview http://www.macca.org.af/en/MAPA_Reports.html
MACCA, GICHD & the Natural Resources Institute (2011) Livelihoods Analysis of Landmine Affected Communities in Afghanistan http://www.macca.org.af/file.php?id=393
MACCA (2011) Mine Action Programme for Afghanistan Mine Action Strategic Guideline 2008-2013 http://www.gichd.org/fileadmin/pdf/ma_development/nma-strat/NMAS-Afghanistan-2008-2013.pdf
MACCA (2012) Afghanistan Mine Action Standards (AMAS) 3.01 April 2011 – Quality Management
MACCA (2013) Proposal to Support Year 1 and Year 2 Of The Ottawa Extension Plan 1 st April 2013 – 31 st March 2015 (Afghan years 1392 and 1393)
MAPA Annual reports 2010 - 2012
OECD (2009) Armed Violence Reduction: Enabling Development. http://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/development/armed-violence-reduction_9789264060173-en
Samuel Hall Consulting (2012) Community Based Approaches for Improving MRE and Perceptions of Deminers, for the Mine Action Coordination Center of Afghanistan (MACCA), Kabul.

Annex 5 – Maps of DDG Mine Clearance Operations

(Source : DDG)

Figure 11: DDG operations supported by different donors (as of May 2013)

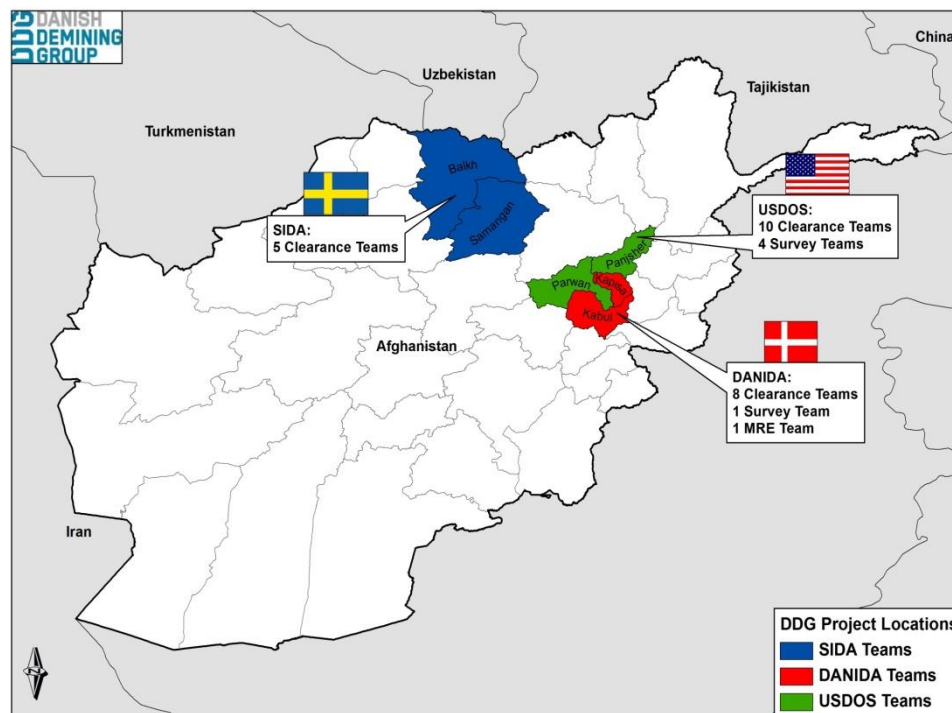


Figure 12: Sida-supported interventions in Balkh and Samangan Provinces

[Map protected]

Annex 6 – Project Sites Visited by the Evaluation Team

[pictures protected]

All photos taken by J. Baker

Annex 7 – DDG Training: Courses and Participants 2010-2013

Danish Demining Group Afghanistan Program

Training Department

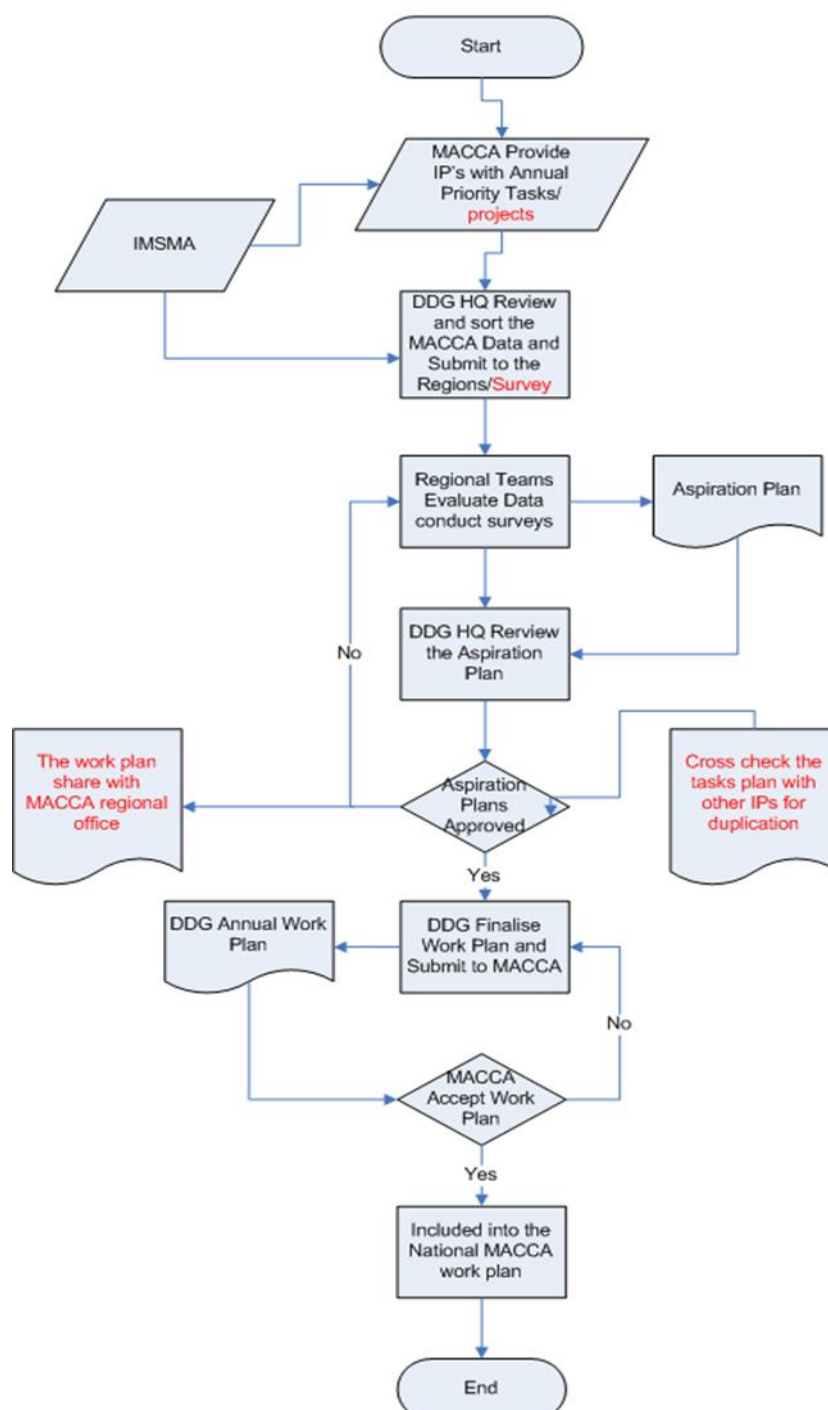
Training Courses Record From October 2010 to March 2013

Years	Number	Type of Courses																					
		De-miner Course	FOD Course	Group Supervisor Course	Section Leader Course	MDU Course	IQAT Course	Medical Course for ISS	PCR Course	Basic Life Support Course	Basic Management Course	Survey Course	CE/AMIL-D1 Course	MRE/IME Course	Radio Operator Course	GICHD International Course	Security Course	Explosive Course	Refresher Training Course	Security Courses	Capacity Building Course	Total	Remarks
2010	No of Courses						1		1			1	1		1	1	1				3	10	
	No of Students						4		14			12	5		14	12	12				159	232	
2011	No of Courses	2				1	3		1			1	1					2			3	18	
	No of Students	80				6	11		9			9	14					9	520		278	936	
2012	No of Courses			1	1		1	2	5	3	1	3	1						4	4	3	29	
	No of Students			3	13		5	26	58	19	8	62	8						710	65	797	1797	
2013	No of Courses																		5	3	2	10	
	No of Students																		541	60	34	635	

Annex 8 – Flowchart for Allocation of Mine Action Tasks by MACCA

Task Planning Process

Wednesday, May 22, 2013





Review of the DDG Humanitarian Mine Action Support to the National Strategy through Clearance and Enhanced Quality Project in Afghanistan (October 2010 – September 2013)

This is an evaluation of a 3-year project supported by Sida and implemented by the Danish Demining Group (DDG), designed to assist the achievement of the aims of the Afghanistan Compact and comply with the Ottawa Convention. The evaluation took stock by assessing progress, highlighting lessons learned, and providing recommendations to help determine the course of future cooperation.

Findings indicate that DDG exceeded mine clearance objectives and made a significant contribution towards meeting Afghanistan's commitments under the Ottawa Convention. One area where DDG did not meet its objectives was in nationalisation of staff positions, which was slower than planned. However, the operating environment has changed significantly over past years and, to continue to remain relevant in Afghanistan, it will be important for DDG to both improve their cost-effectiveness and identify a niche that draws on their expertise in impact measurement and links with development to continue to add value in an increasingly competitive arena.

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