

Annual Project Progress Report

CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT SUPPORT FOR INTEGRATED MINE ACTION IN EASTERN UKRAINE

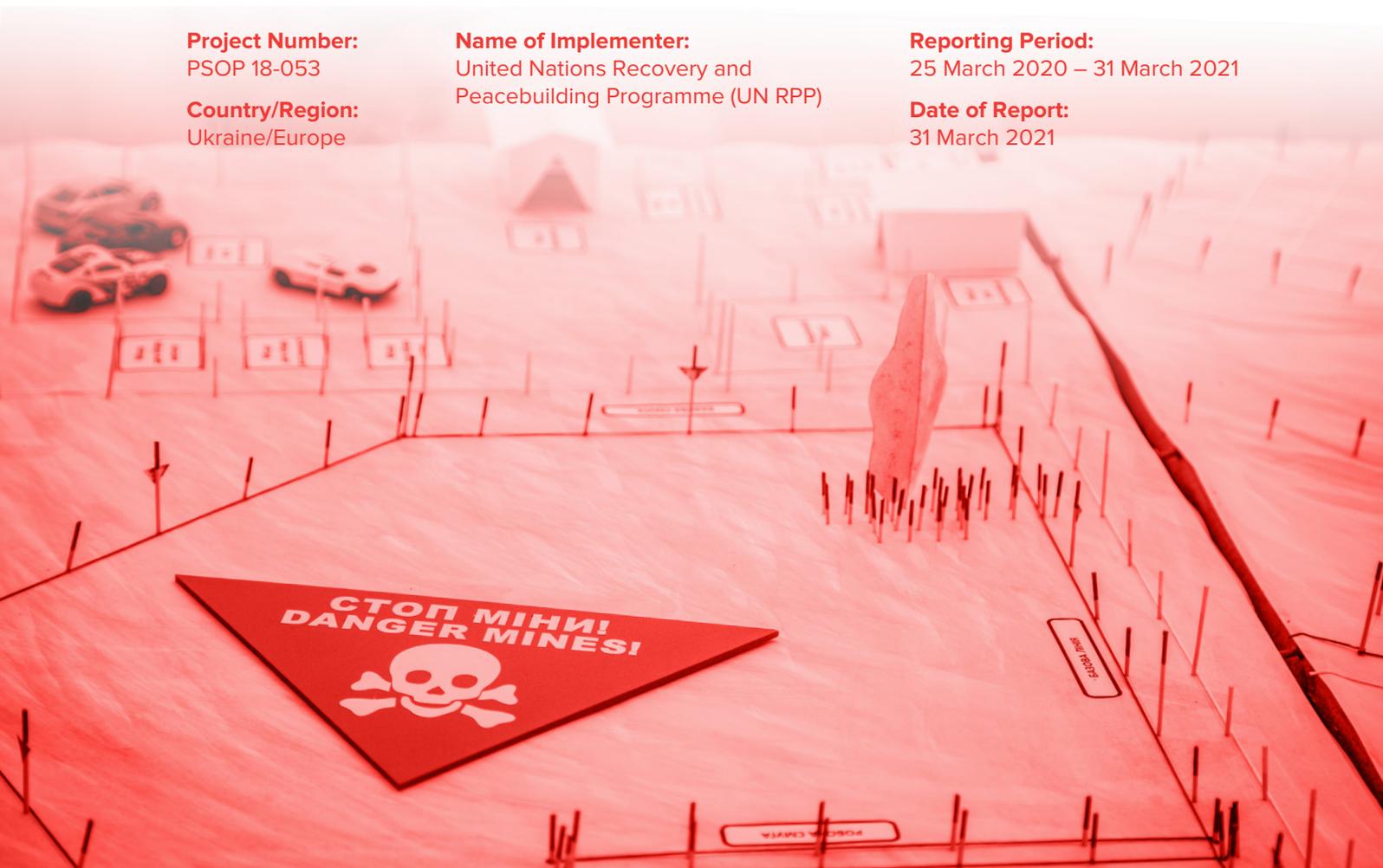
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Acronyms and Abbreviations

BAC	Battle Area Clearance
DRC/DDG	Danish Refugee Council/Danish Demining Group
EO	Explosive Ordnance
EORE	Explosive Ordnance Risk Education
ERW	Explosive Remnants of War
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
FSD	Swiss Foundation for Mine Action
GCA	Government-Controlled Areas
GICHD	Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining
HMA	Humanitarian Mine Action
ICRC	International Committee of the Red Cross
IDP	Internally Displaced Person
IM	Information Management
IMAS	International Mine Action Standards
IMSMA	Information Management System for Mine Action
IMWG	Information Management Work Group
KAP	Knowledge, Attitude and Practices
KII	Key Informant Interview
MA	Mine Action
MACF	Mine Action Charity Fund
MoD	Ministry of Defence of Ukraine
MVA	Mine Victim Assistance
NGCA	Non-Government Controlled Areas
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NMAA	National Mine Action Authority
NMAC	National Mine Action Centre
NTSG	National Technical Standards and Guidance
OSCE PCU	Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe Project Coordinator in Ukraine
RMAC	Regional Mine Action Centre
SC	Sub-Cluster
SES	State Emergency Service of Ukraine
SSTS	State Special Transport Service
UDA	Ukrainian Demining Association
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UN RPP	United Nations Recovery and Peacebuilding Programme

Context Overview

The socio-economic impact of the armed conflict continues to drive uneven and perpetuate non-inclusive development across the country, particularly in eastern Ukraine, including with regard to the protection of human rights and gender equality, equitable access to social and economic benefits, access to quality healthcare, and freedom of movement for civilians living in the conflict zone. These dynamics aggravated existing social fragmentation and prejudices, further deepening regional divides and magnifying pre-conflict horizontal inequalities. Despite United Nations Secretary-General's appeal for a global ceasefire, hostilities in eastern Ukraine initially intensified, leading to an increase of civilian casualties until the renewal of the ceasefire came into effect on 27 July 2020.

The novel coronavirus outbreak has also exposed stark inequalities worldwide and could delay human development for the first time since 1990. According to the UNDP report "Human Development Perspectives COVID-19: Assessing the impact, envisioning the recovery", the combined impact of various shocks affecting health, education and income could signify the largest reversal in human development on record. The fall-out from the pandemic is expected to hit poorer economies and regions harder, as they're less able to overcome the socio-economic impacts of the virus. As of 18 March 2021, there have been 1,504,076 confirmed cases of COVID-19 in the government-controlled areas of Ukraine, including 67,855 cases in eastern Ukraine: in Donetsk (51,935) and Luhansk (15,920) oblasts. The COVID-19 pandemic, combined with the impacts of almost seven years of armed conflict in eastern Ukraine, is further challenging people, households and businesses in unprecedented ways. Intertwined with the multidimensional implications of discrimination and marginalisation, new vulnerable groups have been created, such as health care workers, frontline staff and workers in high-contact sectors and occupations, and informal workers who have lost their jobs and remain without social protection.

As the COVID-19 pandemic has further exacerbated existing vulnerabilities, local communities are now at a higher risk of applying coping strategies (collecting firewood, scrap metal collection etc.) that may put the population at risk of EO accidents. The pandemic has also significantly limited field operations for all MA stakeholders. In regard to Project activities, the COVID-19 outbreak and respective quarantine restrictions have particularly impacted KAP Survey planning and implementation, limiting field staff allocation, the selection and interviewing of individual respondents, and organisation of focus group discussions.

The government of Ukraine is continuously undertaking a reform of its mine action response. The amendments to the Law of Ukraine 'On Mine Action in Ukraine', adopted by the Parliament in September 2020 and signed by the President in December 2020, provide legal grounds for the establishment of a dedicated National Mine Action Authority (NMAA) and Mine Action Centres (MACs) to ensure the coordination of measures for the management and regulation of all mine action activities in Ukraine. Due to the prolonged process of adopting mine action legislation, which has taken longer than anticipated, the main project activities for providing strategic capacity development support for mine action were postponed until the 2021 operational year.

One of the key institutional changes within the system is the creation of two separate Mine Action Centres (MACs) instead of a single Mine Action Centre. The two centres will largely share the same responsibilities in terms of Mine Action (MA) operations; namely, the National Mine Action Centre under the Ministry of Defence and the Humanitarian Demining Centre (structural unit of State Emergency Service of Ukraine) under the Ministry of Interior are operational bodies responsible for information management, quality control and monitoring, operator certification, planning and other mine action operational tasks. Other institutional changes include defining NMAA chairmanship and the formation of the NMAA Secretariat. The Ministry of Defence will hold the chairmanship until the full restoration of the territorial integrity of Ukraine. Afterwards, the NMAA will be chaired by the Ministry of Interior. Further, the NMAA Secretariat's responsibilities include providing support to the NMAA and coordinating the MAC and Humanitarian Demining Centre (HDC).

While the Ministry of Defence of Ukraine is still developing the relevant decrees for the Cabinet of Ministers to establish its MAC, the State Emergency Service has improved the existing HDC in Merefa, Kharkiv Oblast in compliance with operational needs and physically established three Regional Mine

Action Centres (RMACs) in eastern Ukraine. Specifically, the RMAC in Rubizhne town covers operations in Luhansk Oblast, the RMAC in Kramatorsk city covers northern Donetsk Oblast and the RMAC in Mariupol city covers southern Donetsk Oblast. The reconstruction of buildings and interiors is currently underway.

Joining the efforts of international MA stakeholders in the training of demining units, SES has contributed to the adoption of a more unified approach to land release, including physical clearance, that adheres to the UN International Mine Action Standards (IMAS). The planning process of demining tasks, as well as the implementation of planning decisions, has become increasingly coordinated and integrated with other mine action tasks. Considerable developments were also achieved on a tactical level in the information management system for the State Emergency Service of Ukraine (SES); however, there was no positive progress at the national level.

Accreditation and quality assurance functions have been delegated to the Kamianets-Podilskyi Demining Centre of the Armed Forces of Ukraine. The procedures of combined application for quality assurance have been developed and legally approved. As of March 2021, all demining operators presently active in the regions are in the process of obtaining operational accreditation. Quality control activities began in September 2020 for the inspection of cleared land in preparation for the formal release of that land for use by beneficiaries.

Despite some achievements within MA, the impact of mines and explosive ordnance on the human security of the civilian population in eastern Ukraine remains high and does not yet display positive indicators for reduction. Long-awaited MA legislation delayed the establishment of infrastructure required for an efficient MA programme. Ukraine remains one of the most contaminated countries in the world and, in recent years, has experienced the highest number of anti-vehicle mine accidents in the world. From 1 January to 31 December 2020, OHCHR recorded 76 conflict-related civilian casualties resulting from mine-related incidents and EO handling: 17 killed (14 men, 2 women, and 1 child) and 59 injured (44 men, 10 women, and 5 children)¹. This is a 28.8 percent increase compared to 2019 (59: 17 killed and 42 injured). A total of 1153 civilian casualties caused by mines and EO occurred between 14 April 2014 and 31 December 2020 (344 killed, 809 injured), amounting to ten percent of total civilian casualties (at least 3,375 killed and over 7,000 injured).

Given the lack of positive indicators for the impact reduction of mines and explosive ordnance upon the human security of the civilian population in eastern Ukraine, the UNDP within the MA Sub-Cluster convened an EORE working group in September 2020 to discuss the efficiency of the ongoing EORE campaign. The participants unanimously confirmed the urgent need for an up-to-date Knowledge, Attitudes and Practices (KAP) database, as well as more qualitative information regarding the problems faced by populations affected by mines and explosive ordnance.

These pressing challenges are addressed by UNDP within the framework of the project “Capacity Development Support for Integrated Mine Action in Eastern Ukraine.” The project is aimed at supporting the Government of Ukraine in establishing comprehensive, coordinated and gender-responsive MA. This includes providing strategic capacity development support to enhance integrated planning, coordination and operational efficiencies amongst different MA stakeholders presently active at the national level and regionally in eastern Ukraine (Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts). It is integrated into the comprehensive United Nations Recovery and Peacebuilding Programme (UN RPP), which addresses priority needs in eastern Ukraine following the outbreak of armed conflict in the spring of 2014. The Programme is intended to strengthen community security and social cohesion, support the economic recovery of conflict-affected communities, and further the implementation of decentralisation and healthcare reforms in the government-controlled areas of Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts.

The United Nations Recovery and Peacebuilding Programme (UN RPP) is being implemented by four United Nations agencies: the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the UN Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women), the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO).

Twelve international partners support the Programme: the European Union, the European Investment Bank, the U.S. Embassy in Ukraine, and the governments of Canada, Denmark, Germany, Japan, the Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Sweden and Switzerland.

¹ OHCHR (2021), ‘Conflict-related civilian casualties in Ukraine caused by mines and ERW’, dated 28 January 2021.

Activity 1.

EXPLOSIVE ORDNANCE RISK EDUCATION

A central focus of the Project is the enhancement of efforts to mitigate explosive ordnance (EO) risks through an improved explosive ordnance risk education (EORE) framework. EORE activities have been implemented in Ukraine by the Ministry of Defence of Ukraine (MoD) and the State Emergency Service of Ukraine (SES), as well as by international and national aid actors, such as the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), Danish Refugee Council/Danish Demining Group (DRC/DDG), Swiss Foundation for Mine Action (FSD), HALO Trust, Ukrainian Demining Association (UDA), and Mine Action Charity Fund (MACF). Since the beginning of the conflict in eastern Ukraine, mine action (MA) actors have organised several MA studies, including baseline and end line studies (2015 and 2016 respectively) undertaken by DRC/DDG, and a Knowledge, Attitude and Practices (KAP) survey conducted by the ICRC in 2017, which became a vector for further EORE support in Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts. Nevertheless, despite significant efforts taken by MA actors and the overall decreased number of EO victims since 2017, EO accidents continue to occur in conflict-affected communities. In 2020, UNDP and other members of the EORE working group acknowledged the need to take steps for measuring the effectiveness of ongoing EORE efforts.

To this end, the Project initiated a new wave of the KAP survey in Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts in October 2020 to take a renewed look at the level of knowledge surrounding EO in the local population and how prevailing attitudes and stated behaviour may put local communities at risk of EO accidents. The study took a mixed method approach by combining desk research with field data collection through structured personal interviews with community members — both adults and children — and semi-structured focus group discussions (FGDs) and key informant interviews (KIIs) using standardised questionnaires.

The field data collection stage was implemented by the locally contracted non-governmental organisation (NGO) 'Mine Action Charity Fund' and guided by the UN RPP focal points and International KAP Survey Consultant. Data collection was conducted between November 2020 and January 2021 in the government-controlled areas (GCA) of Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts (see Figure 1) using specific location selection criteria, which included concentration of known hazardous areas, EO accidents involving civilian casualties, recent EO accidents, previous EORE taking place, proximity to the 'contact line', and previous KAP survey geographies.



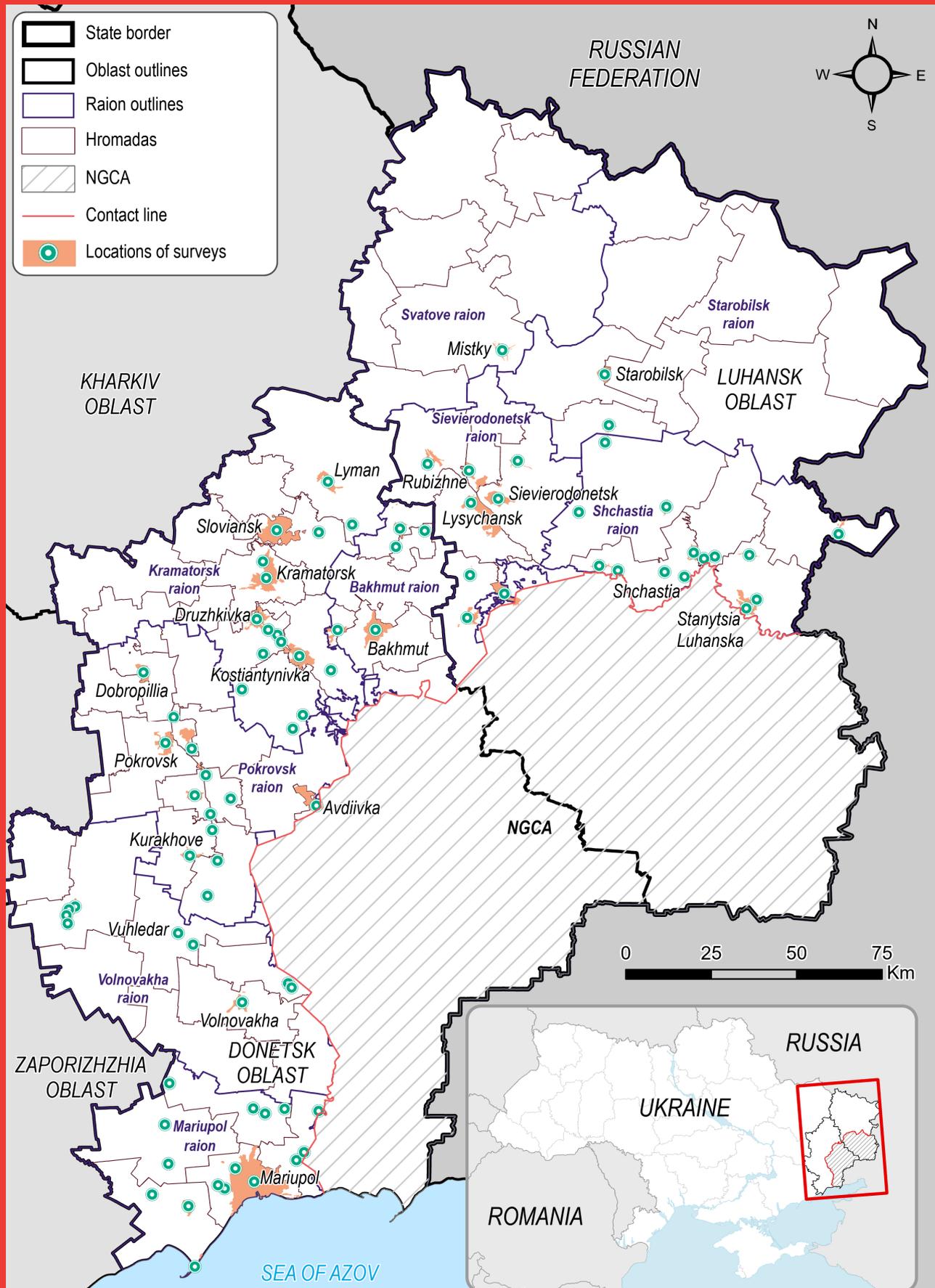


Figure 1. KAP Survey Target Locations in Donetsk and Luhansk Oblasts

08 Activity 1. Explosive Ordnance Risk Education

The survey findings are based on 799 individual interviews (54% female, 46% male, 34% of respondents under the age of 18) and 26 FGDs with community members, as well as 9 key informant interviews with authorities and representatives from the educational, security and private sectors in Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts².

Knowledge

The individual respondents were not asked if they had received EORE but, rather, whether they had received some form of information regarding EO. While 77 percent of all respondents provided positive feedback to the question, just over a third of interviewees (37 percent) said that they had received information about the dangers of EO within the past year, and 22 percent had received information between one and two years ago. At the same time, 41 percent responded that they had not received information in over two years, they could not remember or refused to answer. Similarly, the majority of FGD participants had received some EORE previously; out of 167 FGD participants, 118 stated that they had received EORE.

When asked where they had received information about the dangers of EO, just over a third mentioned the military (35 percent) or the SES (34 percent), while 30 percent mentioned the police (see Figure 2) and 20 percent mentioned either an international or national NGO as a provider of information about the dangers of EO. The majority of children had received information from their teachers (68 percent) and parents (47 percent), while adolescents cited teachers and the military (both at 51 percent), followed by the police (44 percent) and their parents (41 percent) as main sources of EORE. However, adolescent boys ranked teachers (45 percent) higher than the police (42 percent), while adolescent girls ranked both the military (51 percent) and the police (48 percent) higher than their parents (38 percent). As for the means by which respondents had received information about the dangers of EO, the top four sources provided were public meetings and TV (equally), followed by leaflets and social media.

Figure 2. Sources of information about the dangers of EO by age group

Sources of information	6-11 years	12-17 years	18-34 years	35-59 years	60+ years	Overall	
Military	29%	51%	23%	29%	42%	35%	<div style="width: 35%;"></div>
SES	24%	33%	37%	37%	33%	34%	<div style="width: 34%;"></div>
Police	10%	44%	27%	26%	25%	30%	<div style="width: 30%;"></div>
Teacher	68%	51%	11%	3%	0%	24%	<div style="width: 24%;"></div>
Parents	47%	41%	9%	1%	0%	18%	<div style="width: 18%;"></div>
UN	25%	28%	13%	9%	13%	17%	<div style="width: 17%;"></div>
OSCE	12%	22%	24%	11%	10%	16%	<div style="width: 16%;"></div>
International NGOs	3%	5%	21%	23%	12%	15%	<div style="width: 15%;"></div>
Friends	14%	20%	12%	9%	10%	13%	<div style="width: 13%;"></div>
National NGOs	2%	3%	7%	7%	8%	6%	<div style="width: 6%;"></div>
Grandparents	19%	9%	2%	0%	0%	5%	<div style="width: 5%;"></div>
No information	8%	19%	23%	25%	42%	23%	<div style="width: 23%;"></div>

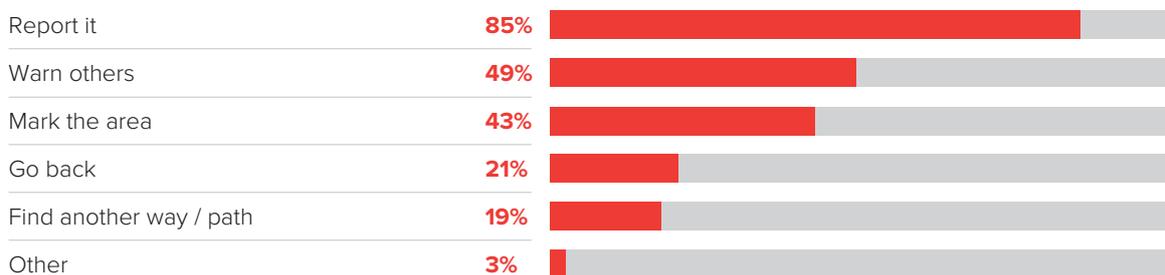
² The results of the KAP survey are visualized on an interactive online dashboard available at: <https://bit.ly/2PHeHeT>

Attitude

When asked whether respondents had ever encountered an EO, most said 'no' (81 percent). However, out of the 136 respondents who answered positively, 20 (14 percent) said that they had not reported the EO. Half of these respondents were men between the age of 35-59 (10 out of 20). Alarmingly, 5 respondents under the age of 18 said that they had encountered an EO but not reported it. When asked why they had not reported the EO, most explained that the presence of the EO was well-known. One respondent said that the EO 'did not pose a threat'.

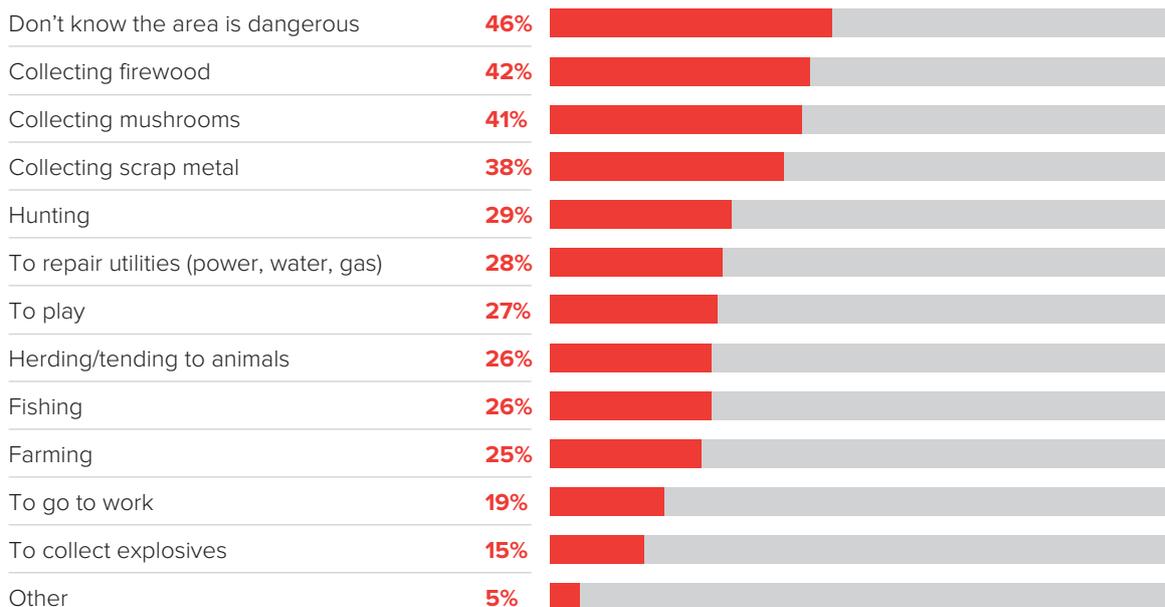
When asked about behaviour during an encounter with any EO, overall, both individual respondents (see Figure 3) and FGD participants stated actions in line with the main EORE messages: avoid approaching, avoid touching, and report.

Figure 3. Stated behaviour in case of finding EO



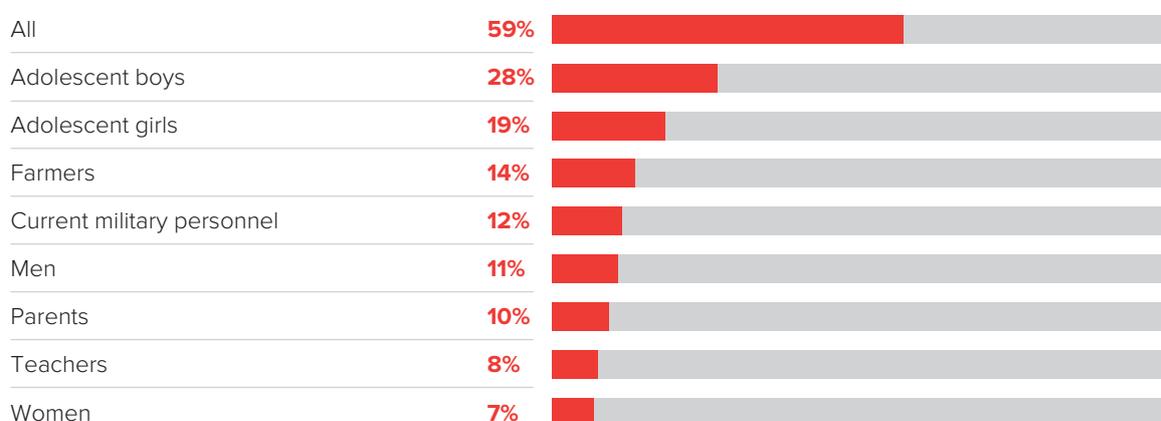
Individual respondents and FGD participants particularly emphasized the risk posed by intentional or forced activities, such as engaging in livelihood activities; in particular, collecting firewood, mushroom picking, scrap metal collection, farming, tending to livestock and tending to gas/power/water lines (see Figure 4). This is very much in line with assessments and reports shared by several EORE providers. Deminers and military men considered at high risk – participants in several FGDs talked about accidents in which deminers were killed by landmines or unexploded ordnance.

Figure 4. Perceived reasons for entering dangerous areas (according to individual respondents)



When asked about who is most in need of EORE (see Figure 5), overall, respondents prioritised groups they considered most at risk. Interestingly, despite the vast majority of respondents having received some form of EORE, the main reason provided for why certain groups need more EORE was that ‘they have little knowledge about EO’ (47 percent). However, when focusing on specific at-risk groups, there seemed to be a high awareness of what could potentially compound the likelihood of an accident involving EO. For example, the importance of providing adolescent boys and agricultural workers with more EORE was linked to their work or living in potentially contaminated areas. Nevertheless, there was a marked assumption that adolescents overall did not know enough about the dangers of EO, despite the fact that 81 percent of individual adolescent respondents and all adolescent FGD participants responded that they had received some form of EORE. Thus, the assumed lack of knowledge was linked to activities potentially placing people at risk, regardless of whether or not they had received EORE. However, IDPs, returnees and people who might be moving around, including across the contact line, were not considered high priority groups for EORE.

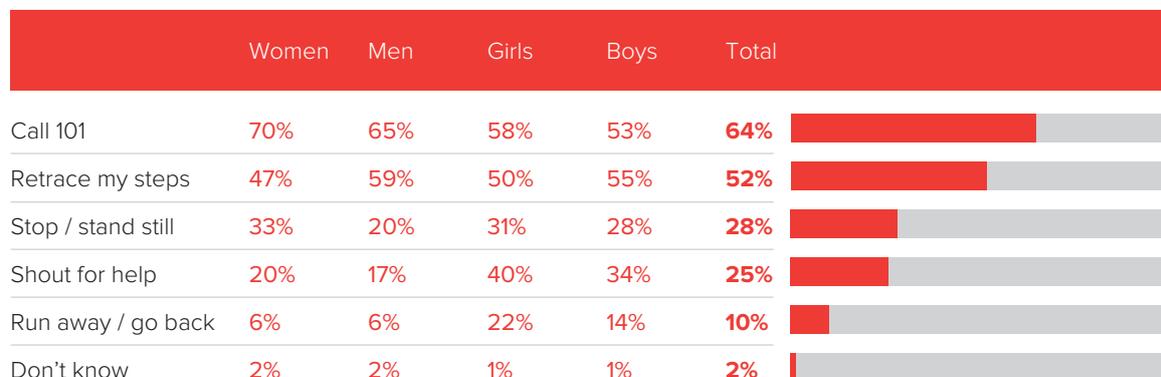
Figure 5: Groups considered most in need of EORE



Practices

The KAP survey methodology does not allow for investigation into revealed behaviour, i.e., how people act in practice when entering dangerous areas or encountering EO. Rather, the KAP survey establishes stated behaviour, i.e., how people state that they will act in certain situations. In order to survey stated safe practices and behaviour, individual respondents were presented with a number of scenarios and asked what they would do (see Figures 6 – 8).

Figure 6. Scenario 1: ‘You believe you are in a minefield. What will you do?’



Activity 1. Explosive Ordnance Risk Education

Figure 7. Scenario 2: 'You see your friend or family member lying injured in a minefield. What will you do?'

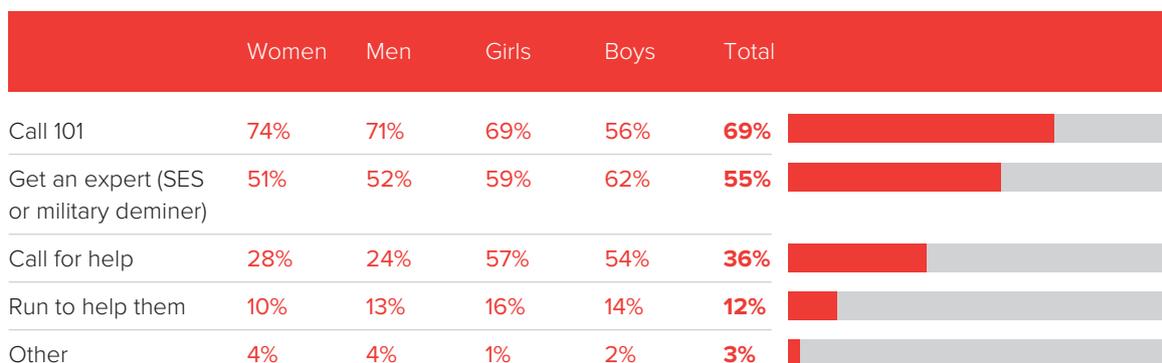
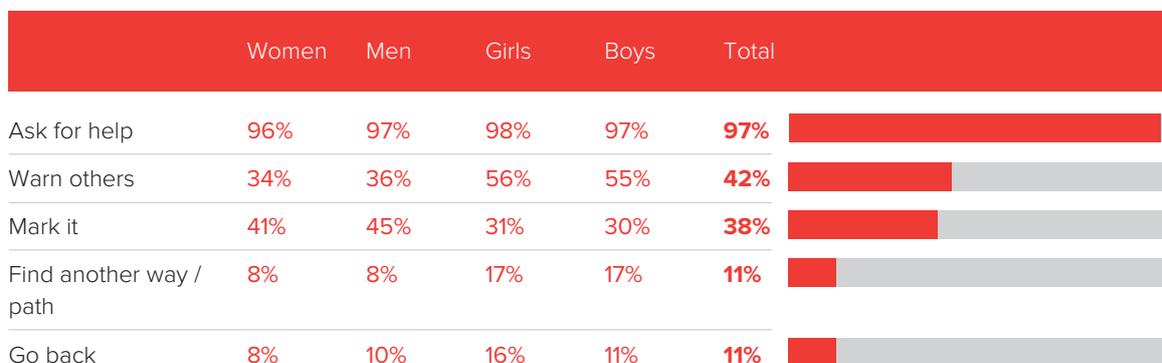
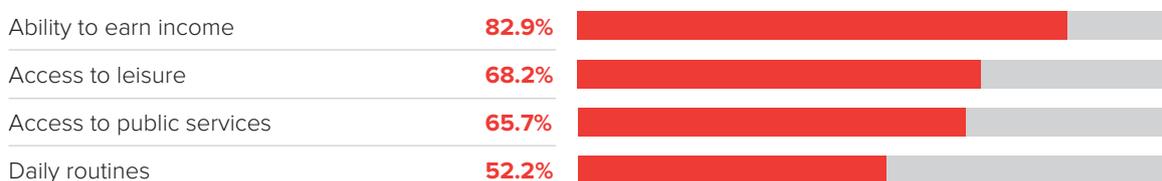


Figure 8. Scenario 3: 'What would you do if you found a landmine or other explosive ordnance close to your house or in your area?'



In general, the majority of conflict-affected population (76%) confirmed that mines and EO are still considered as one of the main barriers to post-conflict recovery and development in eastern Ukraine, which also affects the quality of life of local residents, their access to services and employment opportunities (Figure 9).

Figure 9. Proportion of respondents claiming that the presence of landmines and EEO in their communities had a negative effect on their ...



Based on the findings of the KAP Survey, the following areas have been prioritised to ensure that EORE efforts in and beyond eastern Ukraine comply with the minimum standards outlined in IMAS 12.10 EORE:

- Establishing a national authority to plan, coordinate, prioritise and oversee humanitarian MA efforts
- Drafting a national EORE strategy in line with IMAS 12.10 EORE
- Revising the EORE National Technical Standards and Guidance (NTSGs) to reflect a more flexible approach to community liaison/community engagement
- Disaggregating civilians and military persons involved in the demining operations as different target groups within EORE strategies to better tailor the responses

- Designing EORE messages, materials and methodologies on the basis of identified risk behaviours and target groups.

As a result of the KAP Survey, the UN RPP has identified several areas in which to take the lead for further improvement within the ongoing EORE campaign, namely: database management, quality assurance and quality control procedures and risk educational sessions for different age groups of the population in eastern Ukraine. Accordingly, the UN RPP will select and contract an expert to provide technical advisory services and support in enhancing the prevention of mine risks through an improved educational framework, improving the information management for EORE and developing the relevant National Technical Standards and Guidance (NTSG).

In March 2021, the UN RPP conducted the first introductory session on the results of the KAP Survey for the main MA stakeholders operating in Ukraine within the round table 'Strategic Planning and Development of National Mine Action Program in Ukraine' organised by the OSCE Project Coordinator in Ukraine³. Initial feedback on the collected data was provided by the partners over the course of the meeting. While the UN RPP is planning a two-day workshop in early May 2021 to develop a comprehensive presentation of the findings, the final KAP Survey report is expected to be disseminated among the NMAA, MACs and other key MA stakeholders in April 2021.

³ Offline event was held in Sievierodonetsk (Luhansk Oblast) during 2-4 March 2021, the UN RPP session was conducted on 4 March 2021

Activity 2.

MINE ACTION INFORMATION MANAGEMENT

The Project's efforts under this activity are targeted at supporting the establishment of systematic local information collecting and sharing procedures using an Information Management System for Mine Action (IMSMA) database protocol used globally to ensure the proper planning of MA interventions.

Based on the findings of the secondary data analysis within the KAP Survey, the current state of the information management system is characterised by significant gaps. While the SES has already applied the system on the local level, it did not find positive progress at the national level. There are databases in different fields of MA held by international organisations, such as the OHCHR, DRC/DDG and HALO Trust; however, there is no unified or standardised approach or procedures for gathering, verifying and analysing data.

As a positive step, an interactive map of areas contaminated with mines and explosive ordnance has been developed with the support of the Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining (GICHD). The map is displayed on the official website of the MoD⁴ and is regularly updated by the GICHD.

As of March 2021, the National Mine Action Authority (NMAA) has started the process of organising an Information Management team. At the same time, NMAA has faced challenges in recruiting permanent personnel from the military. This activity anticipates the attraction of specialists for long-term operations, but the system itself contradicts this approach, given that officers generally experience career growth and frequent change of duty station. Moreover, most of the officers who previously passed the relevant training and received the appropriate qualifications in IMSMA are currently unavailable for the assignment.

In this regard, the UN RPP initiated the establishment of an Information Management Working Group (IMWG) to deploy and build an information management system upon which Humanitarian Mine Action is conducted in Ukraine. The IMWG has been operating since January 2021 and is aimed at coordinating information management activities, including the coordination of the development and utilisation of IM technologies and oversight of a core set of information management standards for collecting, sharing and storing data.



14 Activity 2. Mine Action Information Management

The IMWG has been convened within the MA Sub-Cluster led by UNDP. The chairing role in the IMWG has been delegated to the GICHD as a leading international NGO in IMSMA. The IMWG is also represented by other main MA stakeholders, such as the MoD, SES, OSCE PCU, with an extended invitation to national and international agencies, NGOs, and implementing partners as well as other clusters members. Currently, the working group meets on a bi-weekly basis and focuses primarily on the development of the information management implementation project.

The IMWG serves as a platform for both coordinating MA Information Management and supporting HMA activities. The platform is focused on EORE and MVA information gathering and analysis, ensuring the development of adequate gender-, disability- and age-sensitive analytical and reporting capacities amongst actors involved in this information gathering process and the provision of information to core stakeholders and the civilian population to better target mine clearance priorities.

Accordingly, the UN RPP will recruit an International Technical Advisor for IMSMA who will be mainly focused on developing and maintaining databases, reporting tools for relevant MA Activities, and providing guidance to information management users and other relevant mine action partners. These technical advisory services are complementary efforts to the IMWG to ensure the successful integration of proven information management techniques into day-to-day mine action operations in the field.

Photo credit: SES of Ukraine in Donetsk Oblast



⁴ <https://mod-ukr.imsma-core.org/portal/apps/webappviewer/index.html?id=d1fc9330a4964cc793dac7894c725fa3>

Activity 3.

MINES' CLEARANCE AND ASSISTANCE TO MINES' SURVIVORS

The Project places great emphasis on the development of technical capacity for relevant MA government institutions in the field of humanitarian demining activities. In this regard, the UN RPP has identified the MoD and SES as beneficiaries and established a partnership with them to provide further technical assistance and support. The NMAA was not assigned until December 2020. Consequently, technical assistance planning has focused mainly on equipping demining units to ensure humanitarian clearance activities both in land and water areas. Thus, technical assistance will include:

- Equipping the Quality Inspection Team of the Humanitarian Demining Centre of the Armed Forces of Ukraine (under the MoD), which carries out the functions of a quality inspection body, with up-to-date detection systems that allow for both minefield and battle area clearance operations. These systems will mainly be used as a part of external quality control that involves the process of inspecting cleared land to be formally released to beneficiaries for use.
- Equipping the State Special Transport Service (SSTS) of the MoD with underwater searching systems and diving equipment to conduct water area clearance around objects of road infrastructure, such as bridges, overpasses, dams etc.
- Equipping the Special Purpose Demining Team of the SES, based in Rubizhne, Luhansk Oblast, with modern diving equipment, underwater detection systems, underwater communication stations and transportation vehicles. This will allow the team to be self-sufficient, work remotely from other operational support components and conduct a wide range of underwater demining tasks.

The procurement of demining equipment has been organised through the tender in compliance with UNDP procedures and policies. Since such equipment is not widely represented on the local market, suppliers were not identified during the first tender that took place in November 2020. Nevertheless, suppliers of the necessary equipment were identified during the second tender in January and February 2021 and are currently being checked for technical and financial capabilities to meet the terms and conditions of the contract. The provision of demining units with the relevant equipment is planned for June 2021.

Upon the establishment of NMAC and RMACs (Activity 4), the UN RPP will provide capacity development support for the effective management of clearance operations, quality management and assistance to mine survivors. A group of relevant MAC specialists in various areas of mine action is currently being formed at the national and regional levels, and job descriptions are being determined. Additionally, the UN RPP has sent respective requests to the MoD and SES to determine which speciality and qualifications should be prioritised to organise the relevant capacity building for their staff. Based on the results of the specialists' current potential assessment, training activities will be primarily focused on middle managers to enhance capacity in the planning and management of various clearance tasks at the local (tactical) level. Moreover, the secondary data analysis conducted within the KAP Survey has confirmed the necessity of providing these institutions with training in the field of new EORE approaches and community liaison activities to support demining operations, including surveying, marking and the clearance of landmines and explosive remnants of war (ERW).

For years, the Ukrainian response to mine survivor's assistance has remained ad-hoc, uncoordinated and misaligned with the best practices from abroad. The recent assessment of Ukraine's Victim Assistance Capacities⁵ conducted by DRC/DDG has revealed two significant challenges in the Ukrainian legal framework: unenforced existing provisions and gaps.

The current version of MA Law provides a number of services to mine survivors but lacks the crucial legal documents, by-laws and procedures for implementation. MA Law secures rights for medical, psychological, professional and social assistance for all mine survivors; however, there is no complex system or protocol for the general provision of mine survivor's assistance at the national level. At the same time, the legal framework is challenging in terms of data collection. Currently, Ukraine has no central agency in charge of the latter, nor is it mentioned in MA Law. The state capacity to evaluate the scope of required assistance is further thwarted by the fact that healthcare facilities did not identify EO injuries under the International Classification of Diseases at the onset of the conflict (the protocol which obliges them to do so was only introduced in 2018). As a result, mine survivors injured before 2018 face difficulties proving cause of injury when trying to obtain support.

In this regard, the UN RPP is taking steps toward the establishment of a reliable and complete mine survivor data collection system in Ukraine, which the MA SC Information Management Working Group (IMWG) identifies as a main priority. Accordingly, the UN RPP will select and contract an Individual National Consultant to support the establishment of a unified approach to accident/victim reporting in line with the minimum data requirement set out by the International Mine Action Standards (IMAS), as well as contribute to the MA advocacy strategies. Most importantly, there will be an emphasis on a standardised approach to casualty data collection, disaggregation, reporting and analysis that should allow MA providers, national authorities and relevant stakeholders to design, prioritise and implement MA approaches that are accurately tailored to prevalent risk behaviours. The Consultant is expected to start in May 2021.

⁵ 'Assessing of Ukraine's Victim Assistance Capacities' available at: <https://commons.lib.jmu.edu/cisr-journal/vol24/iss2/13>

Activity 4.

CAPACITY BUILDING OF NEW MINE ACTION INSTITUTIONS (NMAC AND RMACS WHEN ESTABLISHED)

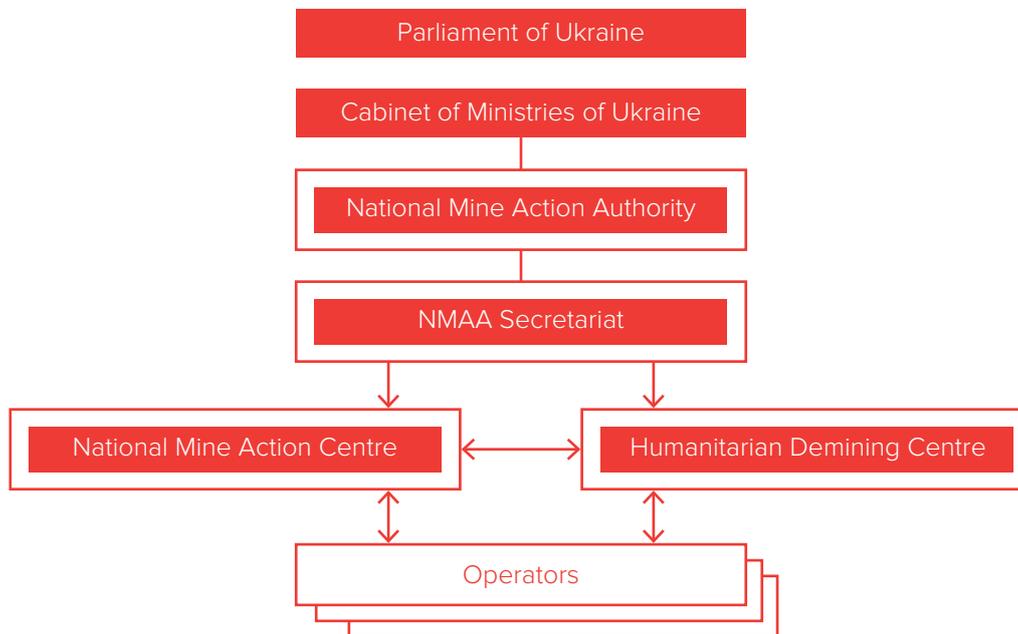
The reporting period was marked by the assignment of legal status to the reforms on mine action response undertaken by the Government of Ukraine. The amendments to the Law of Ukraine “On Mine Action in Ukraine”, adopted by the Parliament of Ukraine in September 2020 and signed by the President of Ukraine in December 2020, provide legal grounds for the establishment of a dedicated National Mine Action Authority (NMAA) and Mine Action Centres (MACs) to ensure the coordination of measures for the management and regulation of all mine action activities in Ukraine. Thus, the current structure of the national MA institutional system includes the governmental bodies of legislative (Parliament of Ukraine) and executive (Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine) power focused on coordination, policy-making and political functions, and the bodies executing operational tasks and quality control over operations. The NMAA, established under the control of the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine, will be chaired by the Ministry of Defence until the full restoration of the territorial integrity of Ukraine. Afterwards, the NMAA will be chaired by the Ministry of Interior. The NMAA Secretariat is responsible for providing support to the NMAA and coordinating the National Mine Action Centre and Humanitarian Demining Centre. The National Mine Action Centre under the Ministry of Defence and Humanitarian Demining Centre (structural unit of SES) under the Ministry of Interior are operational bodies responsible for information management, quality control and monitoring, operator certification, planning and other mine action operational tasks.

Importantly, the Parliament of Ukraine adopted the State Budget for 2021 on 15 December 2020. However, no funds were allocated for the operationalisation of the specialised state bodies envisioned under the recently amended MA Law. The only funding directly prescribed to mine action purposes is limited to 5 million UAH for the Ministry of Temporarily Occupied Territories and IDPs⁶.



Activity 4. Capacity building of new mine action institutions (NMAC and RMACs when established)

The Mine Action Coordination Centre (MAC) of the MoD is expected to be established in June 2021 as a legal entity with coordination functions mutually shared with the MAC of the SES. Currently, the NMAA is in the process of determining the geographic location of the MAC of the MoD. In particular, two cities are being preliminarily considered: Chernihiv and Kyiv. The issue is being considered by the Deputy Minister of Defence.



The SES has made significant advancements in the establishment of the Central MAC in Merefá, Kharkiv Oblast, as well as three Regional Mine Action Centres (RMACs) in Kramatorsk and Mariupol in Donetsk Oblast and Rubizhne in Luhansk Oblast. To date, the Central MAC in Merefá has already started performing basic assigned functions. Moreover, reconstruction works on buildings and interiors in the RMACs are currently underway. As of March 2021, the RMAC in Luhansk Oblast is partially operational. The UN RPP will conduct a series of visits to the MAC and RMACs in April 2021 to identify priority needs for becoming fully operational.

When the MACs of both the MoD and SES are physically set up, the UN RPP will prioritise the organisation of interoperability between both institutions via the MA Sub-Cluster in order to standardise operational procedures, unify information management systems and develop joint approaches to planning. The main functions of the Sub-Cluster are expected to be handed over to the NMAA until the end of 2021. The NMACs and RMACs will become operational at this time. In this regard, the significant developments of the working groups formed within the Sub-Cluster — focusing on assessment and planning, mobilisation and prioritisation of resources, information management, capacity building, quality management and equipment-related issues — will contribute to the strengthening of MAC capacity and a smoother transition period.

In terms of capacity building, the Project interventions also aim to ensure that overall Mine Action in Ukraine has an equal impact on women and men, girls and boys, and that all enjoy equal access to Mine Action as employees and beneficiaries and have decision-making roles in Mine Action in their respective communities. It is crucial that gender-responsive practices are transferred equally across partners and fully embraced by the national authorities. With this goal in view, the UN RPP is in the process of establishing a communication strategy to influence the development of a gender mainstreaming agenda within all mine action pillars and promoting this gender perspective through public and media outreach. To date, the UN RPP has already identified, and is in the process of recruiting, a qualified and experienced National Consultant to provide technical advisory and gender mainstreaming support for Mine Action in Ukraine.

⁶ <https://reliefweb.int/report/ukraine/ukraine-drc-ddg-legal-alert-issue-59-december-2020-enruuk>

Activity 5.

MINE ACTION COORDINATION VIA PROTECTION CLUSTER (MA SUB-CLUSTER)

The Mine Action Sub-Cluster (MA SC) will serve as a unique temporary coordination platform for both national and international MA stakeholders until the National Mine Action Authority (NMAA) and National Mine Action Centre (NMAC) take over these functions.

To date, the Sub-Cluster has been transferred to the Project funds and continues to effectively coordinate mine action operational activities in support of the Government of Ukraine. MA SC meetings are conducted on a monthly basis for MA partners to provide regular updates on MA legislation, mine victim data collection, IMSMA implementation, mine clearance, non-technical survey, EORE and other field-level MA activities. At the same time, MA SC has been recognised by its partners as the only platform that promotes constructive discussion among national and international stakeholders regarding MA legislation, National Mine Action Standards and compliance with the provisions of international treaties (such as the Ottawa Convention). It also provides an opportunity to demonstrate the progress reached in MA by both national and international stakeholders and coordinate existing MA databases to ensure efficient information collection and information sharing among all relevant partners. As of March 2021, MA SC is represented by 15 national and international stakeholders.

During the reporting period, two working groups involving representatives of mine action stakeholders at the national and regional levels in eastern Ukraine were initiated by the UN RPP through MA SC. The working group on KAP Survey operated from October 2020 to February 2021 to support the planning and implementation of the study, providing quality assurance and ensuring the inclusion of main informational needs. A newly established Information Management Working Group has been operating since January 2021 to coordinate information management activities, including the coordination of the development and utilisation of IM technologies, and ensure that a core set of information management standards are in place for collecting, sharing and storing data.



CHANGES TO RISK AND ANALYSIS

1. The timeframe for project implementation may be affected by delays in the establishment of the NMAA, NMAC and RMACs.

The amendments to the Law of Ukraine 'On Mine Action in Ukraine', adopted by the Parliament of Ukraine in September 2020 and signed by the President of Ukraine in December 2020, provide legal grounds for the establishment of a dedicated NMAA and NMAC, as well as RMACs. While the NMAC of the MoD is expected to be set up in June 2021 as a legal entity that mutually shares coordination functions with the MAC of the SES, the NMAA is still in the process of determining its geographical location. The issue is currently under consideration by the Deputy Minister of Defence.

The Central MAC in Merefya, Kharkiv Oblast has already started performing basic assigned functions. Additionally, reconstruction works on buildings and interiors for the three RMACs in eastern Ukraine (Kramatorsk and Mariupol in Donetsk Oblast, Rubizhne in Luhansk Oblast) are already underway. As of mid-March 2021, the RMACs are between 30 to 60 percent ready. Out of those, the only RMAC in Luhansk Oblast is partially operational.

The Project team will closely monitor the situation in relation to the establishment of the new institutions and will conduct a series of visits to identify priority needs in order to make the centres fully operational. If the NMAC is not ready by the stated deadline, taking into account the procurement timing, the UN RPP will redirect funds to support the MAC and RMACs of the SES, where considerable progress has been already achieved.

2. Difficulties in the recruitment of an NMAA Information Management Unit might affect the Project's ability to develop a mine survivors database.

As of March 2021, the NMAA (MoD) is in the process of creating an Information Management team. However, the institution is facing problems recruiting permanent personnel from the military. It is unlikely that such a team will be created and fully operational in the MoD before the end of 2021.

In this regard, the UN RPP and MA stakeholders recently agreed to form a mine action Information Management Working Group (IMWG), which has been operational since January 2021. Additionally, the UN RPP is seeking two consultants within the Project: one international expert for the Information Management System for Mine Action (IMSMA) core platform to be mainly focused on the development and maintenance of databases and reporting tools for MA-related activities; and one national expert to collect information about mine survivors and support the establishment of a unified approach to accident/victim reporting in line with the minimum data requirements set out by the International Mine Action Standards (IMAS). The narrow field of specialisation required for this position has made it difficult to identify relevant specialists for a short time contract. As a result, the UN RPP has already involved local and international partners to aid in the search.

3. The global COVID-19 pandemic has the potential to impact the timing and implementation of the 'Capacity Development Support for Integrated Mine Action in Eastern Ukraine' Project.

Exactly one year after the Government of Ukraine first initiated nationwide quarantine measures to prevent the spread of the novel coronavirus, it remains unclear how long these measures will be in effect. Moreover, as the actions of individual governments and organisations will affect the course of the pandemic in ways that are difficult to predict, there is a great likelihood that the project implementation schedule will be delayed. Some components of the project that may not be directly impacted by the measures described above may nevertheless be affected by delays to other components in the workflow sequence.

National financial institutions will continue to be under pressure while quarantine measures remain in place. The financial stability of Ukraine is currently at risk and the exchange rate of hryvnia to major foreign currencies (especially the U.S. dollar) is expected to increase, thus speeding up inflation and price hikes within the country.

4. Project implementation may also be affected by changes to the security situation along the 'contact line'.

In line with the general security situation along most of the contact line, there has been a notable improvement following the additional measures adopted by the Trilateral Contact Group to strengthen the ceasefire that came into effect on 27 July 2020. Thus far, the average daily observed ceasefire violations along the contact line has been 93 percent lower in March 2021 than in March 2020. However, there is no guarantee that the ceasefire will end soon or that the conflict will not re-escalate. An escalation of the conflict may lead to increased community security risks, infrastructure damage or destruction, and potentially further population displacement from conflict-affected areas. Increased security risks may impact the Project's capacity to intervene at the community level and influence the decision-making process of the MA stakeholders.



Reach

During the reporting period, the Project reached out to the Ministry of Defence of Ukraine, the State Emergency Service in Ukraine and the new Mine Action (MA) institutions established under their jurisdiction, as well as a number of national and international MA actors operating in response to the conflict in eastern Ukraine (see List of Partners in the Appendices).

About 80 settlements in eastern Ukraine have been prioritised within the Knowledge, Attitude and Practices (KAP) Survey in line with specific selection criteria, which included concentration of known hazardous areas, Explosive Ordnance (EO) accidents involving civilian casualties, recent EO accidents, previous Explosive Ordnance Risk Education (EORE) taking place, proximity to the 'contact line', and previous KAP survey geographies.

At the individual level, the Project interviewed 799 conflict-affected persons (434 women). Among the respondents were 398 persons from Donetsk Oblast and 401 from Luhansk Oblast, which included 141 and 131 persons under the age of 18, respectively. The sampling allowed for the collection of disaggregated data (by gender, location, age, disability status) to establish baselines, as well as gather important insights on the level of population knowledge regarding EO and how prevailing attitudes and stated behaviour may put local communities at risk of EO accidents. In addition, 167 community members (51.7% - women and girls) took part in the FGDs on MA prioritisation.

Upon the finalisation of the establishment of key MA institutions, detailed data will be collected over the next reporting period regarding the demining units to be provided with the relevant equipment to ensure humanitarian clearance activities in both land and water areas. The delivery of specialised equipment is expected in June 2021.

Changes to Theory of Change, the Logic Model and Performance Measurement Framework

During the course of implementation, it has been determined that the expected proportion of community members, who are aware of risks posed by mines/EERW and requisite safe behaviours, will be lower than previously estimated (+10% by the end of the Project). COVID-19 related restrictions and lockdowns negatively affected the capacity of local EORE actors to conduct training and information sessions in the communities. It is recommended to change the final target to 5% growth, which is the maximum possible value, that could be achieved by the end of 2021.



Lessons Learned and Actions Taken, Recommendations and Next Steps

Legislative (rulemaking) technique has taken longer than was foreseen by the Project

The adoption of laws and other legislative documents (sub-law, order etc.) at the national level involves a rather long process. This prolonged process can impact timelines for the creation of relevant MA authorities. The development of a legal basis for the creation of the NMAA took over two years. A similar situation is currently being observed in the establishment of the NMAC due to a lengthy legal process of interdepartmental coordination and approval within the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine. These circumstances did not contribute to the budget execution within initial project timelines and provided grounds to appeal to the donor for a no-cost extension of the project's activities until the end of 2021 year.

In fact, this aspect was considered one of the main risks that the Project might face. The Project team has been monitoring the situation and regularly re-evaluating the risks in relation to the establishment of the new institutions. If there is no progress in the establishment of the NMAC by May 2021, the Project will redirect funds to support the MAC and RMACs of SES, where significant progress has already been made.

Understanding the context of humanitarian MA

As part of the first MA initiatives in the country to respond to the conflict, military engineers and SES deminers were mainly deployed to address mine and EO contamination. When MA addressed humanitarian concerns, the state managers involved understood the problem mainly in terms of number of mines/EO and contaminated areas. In most cases, the institutions applied a 'mine-centred' approach with more focus on the most heavily mined areas, rather than a 'people-centred' one, investigating which hazards posed the greatest danger to people and their livelihoods. For these responsible institutions, the clearance of hazards and the destruction of mines and EO has been seen primarily as means to achieve the ultimate goal.

The planning process of current MA activities still demonstrates a lack of perception that the MA is about more than just demining. The MoD and SES managers exert a fair degree of control in producing outputs, but progressively less control over transitioning to short- and mid-term results.

Increased awareness regarding the different components of MA will be achieved through training, workshops and conferences with the involvement of key decision-makers from the relevant governmental institutions. The efforts in organising such events will be also aimed at supporting the Government of Ukraine in drafting National MA strategy and assisting regional and local authorities in developing targeted/specific MA programmes and plans.

Capacity of the local service providers, resource coordination

The lack of necessary national capacities for Project implementation — both human and equipment — has impacted the execution of some activities and the achievement of planned outputs. Other MA action partners operating in Ukraine have experienced many of the same challenges.

In response to this insufficiency, many international organisations have mobilised to support primarily operationally active demining units. A miscoordination occurred among partners in providing assistance to the relevant ministries and agencies involved in MA. The same sectors were covered by multiple organisations while other sectors were left without assistance. For example, the SES received additional equipment and specialist training as part of humanitarian aid. At the same time, however, the demining units of the State Special Transport Service (SSTS), which are responsible for the clearance of road infrastructure, as well as underwater demining units, lacked equipment and training.

Due to the Project, governmental and non-governmental bodies have established good interaction and an exchange of experience via the MA Sub-Cluster. The Project has also facilitated more centralised support of the Government of Ukraine in enhancing integrated planning, coordination and operational efficiencies among the different mine action stakeholders at the national level and in eastern Ukraine in particular.

Limitations due to COVID-19

The COVID-19 pandemic has significantly limited field operations for all stakeholders and there is little expectation that the situation will soon change. In terms of project activities, the COVID-19 outbreak and quarantine restrictions have particularly impacted KAP Survey planning and implementation, causing some limitations in terms of field staff deployment, the selection and interviewing of individual respondents and organisation of focus group discussions.

In this regard, the UN RPP took respective actions to ensure that field data was collected using methods that strongly adhered to established COVID-19 safety measures. Moreover, these obligations were specified in the Terms of References as a part of the contractual agreement between both parties. Importantly, compliance with COVID-19 safety measures was established as a quality criterion for survey performance and indicated as a critical non-conformity in the quality assurance evaluation form. Each enumeration team was subjected to quality inspections, both internal and external, by the Project and no critical non-conformities in relation to the COVID-19 have been identified.

The UN RPP will continue to closely monitor the situation in relation to the spread of COVID-19 and will ensure that relevant service providers are well aware of the prevention measures to guarantee the continuous provision of service through the Project.

Annex 1.

RESULTS FRAMEWORK

Expected Outputs

Capacities of Ukrainian mine action institutions at the national level and in eastern Ukraine (Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts), as well as of territorial communities and civil society are developed to effectively plan, in a participatory and gender-responsive manner, deliver and coordinate SDG linked mine action activities

N°	Output Indicators	Data Source	Baseline	2020 Target	2020 Actual
01	Percentage of community members who are aware of the risks posed by mines/ EERW and requisite safe behaviours <i>Comment</i>	Protection Cluster	10.4% [2019]	+8%	+2.2%
	In total, 12.6% of community members from GCAs of Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts benefitted from Explosive Ordnance Risk Education Sessions, which is 2.2% points increase from 2019. The actual progress was slower than expected due to the restrictions imposed by the COVID-19 and related lockdowns.				
02	Cumulative number of women and men, who actively participate in data collection and MA prioritization (disaggregated by vulnerability) <i>Comment</i>	Project records, KAP survey	0 [2020]	200 (at least 30% women)	966 (54% – women and girls)
	Some 966 community members were covered by the KAP survey, among them: 799 people interviewed (54.3% – women and girls), 167 – participated in focus group discussions on MA prioritisation (51.7% – women and girls).				
03	Gender sensitive EORE framework is in place (including delivery and reporting system) <i>Comment</i>	GoU and Project records	No [2020]	Yes (from month 11)	No
	Mine Action Centre (MAC) has not been established yet. Once MACs capacities are in place, project's records will be cross-checked with MAC's.				
04	Technical procedures for clearance, BAC, NTS and Marking are developed <i>Comment</i>	GoU and Project records	No [2020]	Yes (from month 11)	Yes*
	*As evidenced by the KAP survey, the EORE National Technical Standards and Guidance (NTSGs) are in place but require revision to reflect a more flexible approach to community engagement.				

N°	Output Indicators	Data Source	Baseline	2020 Target	2020 Actual
05	Percentage of EORE and MVA information are recorded in IMSMA and are made public where the data protection and data sensitivity allows <i>Comment</i>	IMSMA records	0% [2020]	60%	0%
Information Management System for Mine Action (IMSMA) is not established yet.					
06	Percentage of CSOs, including women's organisations, which are consulted for the planning of mine action measures at the local level (in territorial communities where the project is present) <i>Comment</i>	Project records, registration forms	0% [2020]	60%	0%
The activity was postponed due to the COVID-19. The results of the KAP survey will be used to inform the elaboration of local gender-responsive Community Security Plans and other measures.					
07	Cumulative number of gender-responsive Community Security Plans designed and implemented to mitigate measures to reduce the likelihood of Landmine and ERW accidents and include victim assistance elements (by oblast) <i>Comment</i>	Project records	0 [2020]	8	0
The results of the KAP survey will be used to inform the elaboration of local gender-responsive Community Security Plans.					
08	Mine survivors' database with sex-, age- and disability disaggregated data is in place and operational <i>Comment</i>	Project records	No [2020]	No	No
The activity is planned for 2021. The UN RPP will recruit an International Technical Advisor for IMSMA who will be mainly focused on developing and maintaining databases, reporting tools for relevant MA Activities, and providing guidance to information management users and other relevant mine action partners.					
09	Cumulative number of local MA actors that benefited from technical assistance and capacity building <i>Comment</i>	Project records	0 [2020]	6	3*
The main MA actors (namely, MOD and SES) benefited from targeted technical recommendations informed by the KAP survey.					
The local NGO "Mine Action Charity Fund" increased its capacity through training on KAP survey methodology, data collection, gender mainstreaming, community engagement, and risk management. These new competencies and skills will allow the organisation to further promote mine action and community security in the conflict-affected areas through advocacy, information sharing and outreach.					

N°	Output Indicators	Data Source	Baseline	2020 Target	2020 Actual
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The following support activities will be provided in 2021:

- Equipping the Quality Inspection Team of the Humanitarian Demining Centre of the Armed Forces of Ukraine (under the MoD), which carries out the functions of a quality inspection body, with up-to-date detection systems that allow for both minefield and battle area clearance operations.
- Equipping the State Special Transport Service (SSTS) of the MoD with underwater searching systems and diving equipment to conduct water area clearance around objects of road infrastructure, such as bridges, overpasses, dams etc.
- Equipping the Special Purpose Demining Team of the SES, based in Rubizhne, Luhansk Oblast, with modern diving equipment, underwater detection systems, underwater communication stations and transportation vehicles.

If NMAC and RMACs set up within project timeframe:

10	Percentage of trained staff (women and men) of new institutions (NMAC and RMACs) confirm relevance of provided equipment, training and knowledge/skills acquisition	NMAC and RMACs records, Project records, training feedback forms and follow-up survey	0% [2020]	70%	0%
Comment					

Upon the establishment of NMAC and RMACs, the UN RPP will provide capacity development support for the effective management of clearance operations, quality management and assistance to mine survivors.