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Evaluation of the Netherlands’ financial assistance for humanitarian demining activities in 1996-2006: Synthesis report

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### Abbreviations

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<th>Abbreviation</th>
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<tr>
<td>BHMAC</td>
<td>Bosnia and Herzegovina Mine Action Centre</td>
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<td>EC</td>
<td>European Commission</td>
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<td>HALO Trust</td>
<td>Hazardous Area Life-support Organisation Trust (a demining NGO)</td>
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<td>HI</td>
<td>Handicap International</td>
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<td>HMA</td>
<td>Humanitarian Mine Action</td>
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<td>IDPs</td>
<td>Internally Displaced Persons</td>
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<td>IMSMA</td>
<td>Information Management System for Mine Action</td>
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<td>LIS</td>
<td>Landmine Impact Survey</td>
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<td>MAG</td>
<td>Mines Advisory Group</td>
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<td>MAPU</td>
<td>Mine Action Planning Unit</td>
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<td>NGOs</td>
<td>Non Governmental Organisations</td>
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<td>NPA</td>
<td>Norwegian People’s Aid</td>
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<td>RIM</td>
<td>Resilience Impact Matrix</td>
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1 Introduction

It is estimated that landmines continue to claim 15-20,000 casualties worldwide per year, providing the rationale for Dutch support to humanitarian demining efforts. This report presents the findings of an evaluation of Dutch financial assistance for humanitarian demining in the period 1996-2006. There is no standard methodology for evaluating interventions in complex post-conflict emergency, reconstruction and development situations. This evaluation was the first evaluation of financial assistance to humanitarian demining since the Netherlands began to support this type of activity. It is part of a larger evaluation into Dutch efforts to control landmines and explosive remnants of war (ERWs), which examines both political and financial instruments. The present evaluation was undertaken in Angola, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Cambodia. All three countries are among the 78 countries and territories in the world affected by landmines.

1.1 Developments in Dutch Humanitarian Mine Action

A Dutch policy on humanitarian demining evolved since the early nineties. However, consecutive policy frameworks gave little strategic direction or vision. Demining policy reflected treaty obligations, common assertions and policy considerations in The Hague rather than an in-depth understanding of the needs of recipient countries or of demining operations, at strategic or technical level.

On 12 April 1999, the Government of the Netherlands ratified the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and their Destruction. Principally, this so-called Ottawa Convention is aimed at achieving a mine-free world. In addition to banning the production, export, use and trade in anti-personnel mines, States Parties are required to destroy all mines in territories under their respective jurisdiction within a ten-year period and undertake to financially assist countries affected by mines to do so. The Convention and subsequent Action Plans form the basis of ensuing international mine action strategies and national landmine policies.

Prior to ratification of the Ottawa Convention, the Netherlands issued two ‘white papers’ on the landmine issue. Following the entry into force of the Convention for the Netherlands, three policy frameworks for ‘humanitarian demining’ were adopted between 1999 and 2004. These policy frameworks focussed on eligibility criteria for funding and lacked a clear strategic objective.

Since 2000 Dutch policy frameworks have underscored the need for a comprehensive approach to humanitarian demining. Recognising that humanitarian demining is a prerequisite for humanitarian assistance, resettlement of IDPs and rehabilitation, all demining activities should be integrated with other aspects of humanitarian assistance as well as with socio-economic rehabilitation plans, such as UN Consolidated Appeals or national Poverty Reduction Strategies.

The most recent policy framework (2004) broadly defines the primary objective of humanitarian demining as “mine clearance in order to reduce casualties and foster socio-economic development”. The use of local workers and transfer of mine-clearance responsibilities to the national authorities (including capacity-building and training) are listed as corollary policy priorities.
1.2 Dutch Financial Contribution

Between 1996 and 2006, the Netherlands was one of the ten biggest donors for humanitarian mine action worldwide, its total contribution adding up to €150 million. In 2006, Dutch financial assistance to humanitarian demining totalled almost €20 million (See Figure 1).

Figure 1 Dutch financial assistance to humanitarian demining.

As of 1997, financial assistance for humanitarian demining was included as a separate item in the humanitarian aid budget. Since 2004, humanitarian mine action has been channelled through the Stability Fund, a fund set up to flexibly support conflict prevention or post-conflict reconstruction activities.\textsuperscript{3}

In addition, the Ministry of Defence established a pool of humanitarian demining instructors in 1995. Dutch military instructors served in Angola, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Cambodia prior to and during the period under review. This contribution however, remains outside the scope of the present evaluation as do contributions to humanitarian mine action through the budget of the European Commission (EC).\textsuperscript{31}

Dutch support in humanitarian mine action has been provided either directly to governments, international NGOs or UN programmes. In the countries under review, Dutch financial assistance has predominantly been channelled through UNDP, Norwegian People’s Aid (NPA), the HALO Trust, Mines Advisory Group (MAG) and Handicap International (HI).

1.3 Definitions

In demining literature, the term ‘mine action’ or ‘humanitarian mine action’ is frequently used. Humanitarian demining is part of ‘humanitarian mine action’ (HMA). HMA covers all activities aimed to reduce the social, economic and environmental impact of mines and ERWs on civilians and their environment. HMA covers not only
mine clearance but also victim assistance and rehabilitation, mine risk education and awareness, advocacy and stockpile destruction.xii

Dutch policy frameworks use the term ‘humanitarian demining.’ In this report, humanitarian demining is used to cover the following activities: (1) examination of the nature and size of a suspected area; (2) preparation of a general plan of action; (3) clearance of mines and ERWs; (4) marking of minefields; (5) follow-up inspections; (6) involvement of the local population in mine clearance activities; (7) transfer of demined land.
2 Summary of Findings

2.1 Relevance

For purposes of this evaluation relevance has been defined as the extent to which Dutch supported demining activities were suited to the policies and priorities of the donor, recipient country and target communities.

As stated above, Dutch policy on humanitarian demining lacked strategic direction or vision and reflected policy considerations in The Hague rather than an understanding of realities on the ground. The primary policy objective of humanitarian demining Dutch policy was defined so broadly – mine clearance in order to reduce casualties and foster socio-economic development – that it would be hard to find any Dutch-funded demining activity that is entirely irrelevant from a donor’s perspective.

Demining objectives were also defined in the context of humanitarian assistance priorities, illustrating that demining was first and foremost seen as a humanitarian activity. In all three countries, initial mine clearance was carried out as part of an emergency response. In the absence of (functioning) national demining authorities and policies, priorities were determined in response to pressing needs such as the provision of humanitarian aid and the return of refugees and IDPs.

Within the broad objectives of Dutch humanitarian demining policy, which remained largely unchanged over the ten-year period under review, the international organisations financially supported by the Netherlands were instrumental in setting the actual priorities for demining activities on the ground. This was most obvious in Bosnia and Herzegovina, where UNDP decided to spend 90% of the Dutch funding on capacity-building instead of actual mine clearance (which was the Netherlands’ primary policy objective).

It is harder to assess the relevance of Dutch supported demining activities in relation to the needs and priorities of affected communities. Given its primary focus on mine clearance, the Netherlands did not – except for Bosnia and Herzegovina – actively contribute to the establishment of procedures that ensured community participation in setting demining priorities. Thus, to what extent Dutch-financed activities were relevant to the needs of the target community depended basically on the approach taken by the demining organisations it supported and how their activities tailored to the needs and priorities of affected communities.

The same was true for the development of national institutions and capacity, again with the notable exception of UNDP in Bosnia and Herzegovina. The Netherlands maintained its focus on actual mine clearance and assistance to a select group of international demining organisations. In Angola and Cambodia, the Netherlands did not financially support the development or strengthening of national regulatory capacity. While mine clearance was key to initial humanitarian relief efforts, donor support that remained exclusively directed at international NGOs that ‘did’ mine clearance may in fact have hampered the transfer of responsibilities to the recipient state. In Bosnia and Herzegovina, unintended, the Netherlands contributed to building a strong foundation for local ownership and national self-reliance in mine action.
Although over time, Dutch policy favoured the integration of humanitarian demining and development, the evaluation team found little evidence of actual integration of humanitarian demining activities and development assistance, neither at policy nor at the operational level. At headquarters, decision-making on funding demining activities and the provision of development aid remained largely separate processes. Neither have Dutch funded demining and development activities been integrated at country level. For example, humanitarian demining activities were not integrated into national development policies or plans, even if these included a reference to demining. In fact, the termination of the development relationship with Cambodia in 1998 did not affect humanitarian demining activities. The most tangible link with development was made within and through the approaches of demining organisations towards humanitarian demining. In Angola, for instance, Dutch contributions were used to fund so-called community liaison teams, which implement a holistic approach to demining.

2.2 Effectiveness

For purposes of this evaluation, effectiveness has been defined as the extent to which Dutch supported humanitarian demining activities attained their objectives.

Assessing the effectiveness of Dutch financial assistance to HMA remains a complex undertaking. It is complicated by the general nature of the objectives of humanitarian demining as stated in project as well as policy documents, by the fact that both NGOs and UNDP programmes financed by the Netherlands have multiple sources of funding and because Dutch financial support is usually not earmarked for specific activities – though this was done in some cases in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Tracing the effects of donor money is particularly difficult when funds are provided through multilateral channels.

Notwithstanding the above, the evaluation teams found that in general, intended direct outputs of programme and projects were largely achieved. The decision of the Netherlands to concentrate the bulk of its resources on actual mine clearance has produced tangible results in terms of square km of land cleared and mines removed in Angola and Cambodia, and build considerable capacity at the operational level. Land cleared through Dutch financial assistance was, with some notable exceptions in Bosnia and Herzegovina, productively used for a.o. subsistence farming and housing. Supporting the multi-year UNDP HMA programme in Bosnia and Herzegovina proved highly effective though joining a multi-donor programme inevitably involves some degree of compromise regarding original objectives.

As regards the overarching Dutch policy objective of casualty reduction it is more complicated to correlate Dutch financial assistance to progress achieved. The relation between mine clearance and casualty reduction is not straightforward, and the common assertion that removing mines is the best way to reduce casualties not unchallenged. Clearance is above all slow and expensive and other approaches may lead to greater reduction in casualties, sometimes even sooner. When people take deliberate risks entering hazardous areas for economic purposes, it has been suggested that addressing the people’s economic needs might be the best approach, as in Bosnia and Herzegovina and Cambodia.
In all three country cases, the greatest multiplier of effectiveness turned out to be the existence of a transparent and functional national prioritisation system for clearance tasks, that takes account of the socio-economic prospects of the land. While the economic impact of individual clearance tasks is most visible on local and subsistence level, a national prioritisation system weighs up both short-term livelihood and humanitarian needs and long-term macro-economic imperatives. This way, national demining policies translate into local realities and vice versa. The existence of a functioning prioritisation system provides a positive indicator of the effectiveness of demining activities.

While having an overall positive impact on stabilising conditions for refugees and IDPs to return in the immediate post-conflict phase, the evaluators found some serious drawbacks due to a too narrow focus on clearance only: in Srebrenica, for example, land was cleared while the community had no intention to return. In other areas, houses were cleared without sufficient land for agriculture, or agricultural land was cleared without the families having the necessary resources to farm. In Cambodia, initially, returnees to cleared areas were not able to grow enough food to sustain them. Over time, strengthened cooperation between demining and development organisations resulted in people being provided with development assistance after the land had been cleared.

The relation between humanitarian demining and peacebuilding and reconciliation is more complex to assess. The acceptance by the population of a national prioritisation system appears to have contributed significantly to reducing concerns of giving unfair advantage to others, including formerly opposing groups. This holds particularly true for Bosnia and Herzegovina, where it was possible to set up a single Mine Action Centre (BHMAC), despite the highly fragmented political situation. The fact that BHMAC is able to work with a unified management structure and runs the overall prioritisation and clearance process is a significant achievement and certainly had its share in national peace and confidence building. In Angola, ongoing demining efforts had a direct and positive effect on the process of democratisation, in particular on the elections scheduled for 2008-2009. Opening roads allowed access to formerly inaccessible municipalities for voter registration, education, campaigning and eventually voting.

While mine clearance enhanced a sense of general security and safety, the evaluation team also found that in areas that remained unsafe, communities have over time adapted their lives to this 'environmental risk', which they count as one among other threats and risks to their life and livelihood they have to cope with, such as drought, flood, soil erosion or shortage of firewood. In fact, ‘living with mines’ has become a reality for many communities in post-conflict societies, and does not always score on top of the urgency list.

In sum, the evaluators found that the following factors contributed positively to the achievement of objectives:

- The NGOs’ ability to adapt to continuously changing circumstances, their flexibility of planning and innovative approaches to humanitarian demining;
- Good collaboration and coordination between demining NGOs and national authorities;
- Growing attention to post-clearance impact on affected communities and the concomitant strengthening of participative approaches to survey and data gathering;
Coordination among donors in the field, demining and development NGOs and security forces, setting common priorities; Processes ensuring community participation in task selection and prioritisation.

Factors that contributed negatively to the achievement of objectives included:
- Lack of monitoring and evaluation of Dutch-funded programmes
- Not using reported results of programmes to adapt policy priorities to more accurately respond to the needs on the ground
- Discrepancy between strategic developmental oriented goals and technical demining goals
- Absence of, or limited capacity of, national counterparts and authorities;
- Lack of Dutch support to institutional development and the development of processes aimed at community participation in setting priorities for HMA;
- Lacking integration of demining activities with development policies and priorities at international, national and local level;
- Slow or no transfer of responsibilities to the national authorities;
- Reluctance of people to return to rural areas, even after clearance;
- Uncertainty of structural or short-term funding.

As far as the evaluation team could assess, none of the demining organisations financially supported by the Netherlands measured the impact as distinct from outputs or results, of their demining activities in terms of actual or intended land-use or according to other indicators. For example, no prior impact assessment was done before funding demining activities and no methodology for post-clearance impact assessment existed. The absence of monitoring post-clearance land use also meant that no record was kept of land that had been cleared but was not used thereafter.

While the majority of demining organisations did not question the importance of conducting a post-clearance impact assessment – in addition to monitoring and evaluating outputs and results – some demining organisations questioned whether they would be the best-suited agents to carry out such assessment and referred to development organisations as better equipped for this task, thereby reinforcing the disconnection found to exist between demining and development.

2.3 Efficiency

For purposes of this evaluation, efficiency has been defined as the extent to which the demining activity used the least costly resources to achieve the desired results.

The evaluation team has been able to assess that organisations supported by the Netherlands have succeeded in improving, through trial and error, the cost and time-efficiency of their demining operations.

Scattered small-scale emergency response clearance is not generally efficient in the use of deminers or technical assets. However, particularly in the immediate post-conflict phase such tasks may have to be carried out in response to pressing humanitarian needs. Inefficient use of demining resources is unavoidable in an immediate post-conflict environment, especially when no Landmine Impact Survey (LIS) has been done (yet) and no strategic decisions can be taken about where and when to demine.
Based on the three case studies, there are two approaches to achieving a good standard of efficiency in humanitarian demining operations: 1) improving efficiency through continuous innovations in terms of methodology (and technology), and 2) through addressing mine clearance as a socio-development issue in the wider context of community development.

In Angola as well as Bosnia and Herzegovina, demining organisations developed analytical approaches to reduce the amount of land identified in the Landmine Impact Survey (LIS) as hazardous and requiring clearance. Threat area reduction is important as it addresses the key problem in demining: to demine where there are mines and not to clear where there are no mines. In Angola, one organisation has developed a ‘conflict analysis’ methodology, to be done prior to carrying out demining. Through overlaying data relating to the history of the conflict, information from villagers, socio-economic and land use data, on satellite imagery, the rough location, the possible number and types of mines could be assessed with some accuracy. This facilitated the choice for the most suitable intervention in collaboration with the affected community.

Over time, the efficient use of scarce demining resources was greatly enhanced through decentralised and bottom-up planning and task selection as compared to earlier top-down emergency-driven priority setting for humanitarian demining. In Cambodia, since the introduction of the Mine Action Planning Unit (MAPU) mechanism, priorities for mine action have been directly influenced by the local population and authorities, resulting in greater efficiency in relation to addressing the needs of affected communities. Through monitoring post-clearance land use, the MAPU process has also enhanced the likelihood of land being used as intended after clearance. It should be noted however, that Dutch funding did not contribute to these processes.

In Bosnia and Herzegovina, the evaluation team found that the lack of linking mine clearance to development led to clearing land that was not immediately used. It also found situations where houses were cleared given the humanitarian priority of return but without sufficient land to sustain a livelihood, which was considered from a demining perspective a second priority.

2.4 Sustainability

For purposes of this evaluation, sustainability refers to whether the benefits of a demining activity are likely to continue after donor funding has been withdrawn.

While too early to tell whether demining was sustainable after a period of merely ten years, some findings are certainly worth considering. The evaluation team found that major factors contributing to the sustainability of the demining efforts were the existence of national institutional capacity and a national prioritisation process, as well as the level of integration between demining and development. These were generally not addressed by Dutch funding. Additional factors included the coordination between international NGOs and national demining authorities and continuation of donor support. The Netherlands did not play an active role in coordinating mechanisms for mine action in the countries in question.

There are substantial risks in the medium term to keeping a rigid focus on mine clearance. Throughout the period under review, Dutch funding remained largely focused on mine clearance and was not integrated with development assistance at
recipient country level. On the one hand, it is unavoidable that some demining activities carried out in the immediate emergency phase following conflict are not sustainable as these are above all aimed at returning to normality. In Cambodia and Angola, for example, land was cleared for temporary resettlement by returning refugees. This land is now largely abandoned as people have returned to their homes. On the other hand, the evaluation team found that, in Bosnia and Herzegovina, the lack of linking mine clearance to development led to situations where houses were cleared given the humanitarian priority of return, but without sufficient land to sustain a livelihood. The latter was considered from a demining perspective a second priority. In general however, the emergence of national coordinating structures and more intensified cooperation between demining and development organisations in the field, the sustainability of the efforts improved substantially.

From this perspective, it has become clear that national authorities need to be in charge. Indirectly, through its support to actual mine clearance, the Netherlands contributed to building demining capacity at the operational level. While such operational capacity is key to sustaining demining efforts by humanitarian demining NGOs as well as commercial demining organisations, this report shows that capacity-building on the national level (and its links with provincial and municipal levels) in general has been insufficient and needs to be continued, if not enhanced in order to make past efforts sustainable. As the case of Angola’s incorrect IMSMA database underlines, it is essential to safeguard a proper record keeping of hazardous and cleared land according to internationally recognised standards.

2.5 Monitoring Mine Action

Between 1996 and 2006, official monitoring of Dutch financed humanitarian demining activities notably decreased over time in all three countries under review, irrespective of obligations to do so.xiii The reasons appeared to be largely due to lack of human resources. Whereas Dutch funding partners submitted their annual reports, it was not evident to the evaluators that these reports were critically examined or that these resulted in adapting Dutch policy objectives and priorities to the reality and needs of the country. The same was true for relevant socio-political developments, such as the setting up of national demining institutions, prioritisation system, LIS, economic growth and return of IDPs; these developments did not visibly result in adaptation of funding priorities or preferred type of mine intervention. (see chronological overview in country reports) While there are understandable reasons for following a standard policy, there is a risk that this becomes a ‘One Size Fits All’ approach that might in fact be less appropriate in a particular context.xiv

Initial monitoring of demining activities led to informed decisions in response to developments on the ground. In Angola, when war broke out in 1998 and mines were used again by the warring parties, Dutch support was continued despite the fact that Ottawa Convention was breached. This decision yielded positive results. In contrast, the Netherlands abruptly stopped funding to Cambodia following allegations of corruption. This resulted in an immediate “house-cleaning” and the significant reduction of corruption, and was appreciated by some as positive and long overdue. However, the immediate effects were serious: 2000 deminers had to be laid off and mine action in Cambodia almost came to a halt.
The examples underscore the importance of reliable information in order for donors to determine the best way forward. This might also require a more substantial assessment of possible consequences of donor action. In order to optimise the use of scarce resources, regular reporting, monitoring and evaluation should therefore inform resource allocation decisions at policy level. In order to do so, there are various instruments available.

Figure 2 shows an overview of the decision-making process for demining activities, and includes existing facilitory policy tools at the donor (strategic), national (operational) and local (tactical) level.

For purposes of this analysis, it is useful to put the findings of the present evaluation in the Resilience Impact Matrix (RIM). The RIM provides a means to identify what programme intervention is best suited for each country given its specific context. It examines two criteria, resilience, the ability of a country to handle disruptive challenges, and impact. In the case of landmines, a country with a relatively large population and economy (wealth), as well as functioning national demining institutions has greater resilience. Impact of landmines can be deduced from the basic data contained in the LIS (see Figure 3).
Placing Angola, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Cambodia in the matrix reinforces the findings of the evaluation team. When a country has high impact but low resilience, which is typically the case in the period immediately after violent conflict – but also in Cambodia – it is appropriate to concentrate efforts on large-scale mine clearance by international organisations in areas of socio-economic value. Once a country has developed mechanisms to cope with mines, and prevalence remains high, as in Angola and Bosnia and Herzegovina, it is usually more effective to concentrate resources on management training and strengthening the national capacity. RIM analysis can assist to adapt policies and to develop an exit strategy by identifying the most appropriate way to help a country move from its original classification to becoming a country that can deal with its mine problem.

2.6 Evaluating Mine Action

There is no standard methodology for evaluating interventions in complex post-conflict emergency, reconstruction and development situations. The evaluation at hand was the first evaluation of Dutch financial assistance to humanitarian demining since the Netherlands began to support this type of activity. It is not surprising therefore that this evaluation raises fundamental questions of approach and timeframe.

Although in all three countries, Dutch military demining instructors were seconded by the Ministry of Defence in the 1996-2006 period, the present evaluation was carried out exclusively by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and explicitly excluded an evaluation of the impact of the Dutch military contribution. This seems at odds with the current policy emphasis on an integrated approach to post-conflict reconstruction interventions. Similarly, although part of Dutch financial assistance for humanitarian demining was channelled through the EC, and the EC ran substantial demining programmes in all three countries in the period under review, the impact of the EC contribution was not
part of this evaluation. In the view of the evaluators, the effectiveness of Dutch financial assistance for humanitarian demining should have been assessed comprehensively.

The timeframe of this evaluation was tight. Consequently, three different field teams evaluated Dutch-assisted demining efforts in three countries simultaneously. It would have improved the comparison of findings, consistency of approach and analysis if one team had evaluated three countries consecutively. In addition, the timeframe did not allow for all sites to be visited and the evaluation team developed criteria for site selection as a consequence.

The present evaluation is part of a larger evaluation of Dutch efforts regarding landmines analysing two policy instruments: political and financial. Part 1 was carried out internally (IOB) and part 2 partially out-sourced. The first phase of this evaluation, an analysis of Dutch demining policy, strategies and activities as well as an analysis of eligibility criteria for country, programme and project selection was to precede and form the basis for the review of effectiveness of demining interventions in the field. However, the preliminary desk research was not completed prior to the departure of the field evaluation teams nor before finalisation of the evaluation reports. Figures in earlier drafts that the evaluation team received proved partially inaccurate. The lack of these data hampered the field evaluation and required substantial additional research. In our view, such a clear separation between field research and the desk-based work on which it should be based, does not add value.

It is clear that measuring overall effectiveness of bilateral donorship towards a certain peacebuilding activity remains a challenging task given the complexities of intervening in post-conflict recovery situations. This report raised pertinent questions in this regard, which will have to be addressed in order to learn lessons for future evaluations. Yet, the evaluation at hand suggests that both monitoring and evaluation should be a regular feature of financial assistance to demining programmes. Also there is need for a prior impact assessment to be undertaken and indicators and benchmarks of impact and effectiveness of the intervention defined ex-ante. Without defined goals defined before an intervention is started the effectiveness and impact are hard to measure. Given the complexity of tracing the precise use of an individual donor’s contribution, this could be undertaken by a group of donors working in the same region, supporting the same organisation or working towards the same goal. Ex-ante impact assessment, regular monitoring and reporting, analysis of information received with a view to adapting donor policy and follow-up evaluation after mine-clearance could greatly enhance the effectiveness of mine action interventions.
3 Policy Challenges

In addition to gaining insights into the effectiveness of Dutch support to humanitarian demining, the evaluation team deems it useful to draw the attention to some of the broader issue that are emerged during discussions with the demining organisations on the ground. The policy challenges should play their part in shaping future decision-making on humanitarian demining.

3.1 Mine-Free versus Mine-Impact Free

The Ottawa Convention aims to achieve a mine-free world within ten years of its entry into force. Consequently, Dutch policy has consistently emphasised the removal of all mines. With an estimated 30-100 million landmines worldwide, and no willingness on the part of the international community to invest the resources for detection and clearance of every mine – which would not make any sense from a cost-benefit perspective – this goal is unattainable in the near future. The question is, whether the international community should insist on a mine-free world as a treaty obligation as a policy objective, when it comes to the most effective use of scarce financial resources in the broader context of humanitarian assistance and development aid?

In all three countries, there were examples of national policies and humanitarian demining organisations financially assisted by the Netherlands aiming to achieve a mine-impact free rather than a mine-free end-state. In order to use financial resources effectively and efficiently, and with the greatest impact, innovative approaches to reduce the amount of areas that needed clearance (threat area reduction) proved useful. In other words, this approach determines priorities for clearance based on risk-based assessment and assists communities to ‘live with mines’ rather than to remove all mines. Particularly when post-conflict countries move from an emergency response to a development approach, organisations increasingly treat mines as one of the blockages to poverty reduction and development.

For example, in MAG operations in Angola, the Landmine Impact Survey (LIS) is updated through a community liaison (CL) process. Community Liaison teams visit villages and map different data (military hardware and positions, history of the conflict, social, population movements, economic, geological and political) on satellite imagery, producing a comprehensive overview of the situation in a particular location, the so-called ‘conflict analysis.’ The ‘conflict analysis’ informs further decisions on clearance (See Figure 4).
The ‘conflict analysis’ has become an important strategic planning tool that forms the basis for all clearance plans, prioritisation of clearance tasks and interaction with the community. It emphasises threat area reduction through a process of exclusion (identify areas that don’t need to be cleared because they do not contain, and have never contained mines) rather than the usual inclusion (identifying what needs to be cleared because there is some suspicion, LIS). In this way, much land – frequently as much as 90% – can be returned to use without the expense of clearing each square metre. On the basis of the ‘conflict analysis’ the mine clearance plan is matched with the needs of the local communities and areas for clearance decided upon. In addition to increasing the efficiency and effectiveness of humanitarian demining operations, this approach empowers the local population in mine-affected areas not to be paralysed by fear of mines but to be an active part of the solution. Actually, in some cases, communities opted for more appropriate solutions than mine clearance.

Similarly, NPA is moving to a redefinition of humanitarian demining: the core issue no longer being the removal of all mines but rather how to diminish the impact of landmines on daily life (the so-called solutions-based approach). This can be done, a.o. through clearance, marking, fencing and mine risk education. In Bosnia and Herzegovina, NPA has developed a sophisticated risk management approach to mine action, aimed at containing the threat of landmines instead of their complete removal. This is done through identifying and measuring the risk of the physical presence of mines (risk analysis), and looking at the condition of vulnerability of various social groups (risk assessment). Reducing the risks to an acceptable level lies at the core of this approach. In some cases, ‘living with mines’ is the only realistic option.

While a ‘mine-free world’ remains an inspiring statement of purpose and advocacy goal, risk management and conflict analysis offer valuable tools in setting priorities and realistic goals for mine action planning in order to focus scarce resources on activities where such resources can be most efficiently and effectively used. The international
community will have to find a delicate balance between domestic policy guidelines and the realistic options that are dictated by circumstances on the ground.

3.2 Integrated Approach to Humanitarian Demining

There is a general consensus that humanitarian mine action is not just a technical aspect of an emergency response but a prerequisite for reconstruction, stabilisation and development. Once casualty levels have dropped to a certain ‘background’ level, humanitarian mine action is in essence a long-term economic activity and one of the impediments to development. If one sets that level at “less than road casualties for the same mine affected regions” all three countries have already reached that level.

Failure to integrate mine action into development plans, programmes and budgets at donor and recipient country level was quoted by many interlocutors as one of the main factors diminishing the effectiveness and impact humanitarian demining. The UN has cautioned that failure to integrate mine action and development may result in failure to achieve the strategic objectives of demining as well as development objectives. Realising the importance of integrating development and demining, the Prime Minister of Cambodia recently declared achieving a mine-impact free status the ninth Millennium Development Goal.

Despite policy statements and frameworks to the contrary, humanitarian demining remains a largely separate activity in The Hague, institutionally and as regards budget allocation. The incorporation of demining in the Stability Fund has not changed this. A recent evaluation found that demining has remained a ‘separate kingdom’ within the Stability Fund. This was mainly due to institutional divisions within the Ministry and internationally. This reflects a broader trend within today’s international development debate. While donors are trying hard to work towards a more integrated approach, these efforts mostly include budget responsibility at the end, rather than at the start of the process. If donors are to arrive at a truly comprehensive approach, they will have to tackle inter- and inner-departmental budget issues at the very beginning of the discussion.

Practical limitations to working in a more integrated manner are also visible at the field level. Many demining NGOs recognised the need for a comprehensive approach, integrating mine action and development. However, in practice, the majority of demining organisations functioned separate from development organisations. They did not see it as their task to ensure that development takes place following demining and that demining was incorporated in national development plans and strategies. Post-clearance development initiatives were at best loosely coordinated with demining efforts. In fact, when asked, demining organisations were generally not aware whether demining was included in national development or reconstruction plans. Even within organisations that profess to do both development and mine clearance, like NPA, both strands of activities may be entirely separate. In Angola, for instance, NPA’s development and demining programmes ran at the same time in different provinces.

This was markedly different in humanitarian emergency operations, where there was close cooperation between demining organisations and WFP, UNHCR on, for instance, road clearance, bridge building and resettlement site clearance. Once the country shifts into a development paradigm, however, demining tends to continue as a separate activity de-linked from development efforts. The strongest indication of the emergence
of an integrated approach at the operational level were the community liaison teams deployed by demining organisations to assess the overall developments needs of a community in order to map out an effective mine clearance intervention, in the context of a wider development approach.

3.3 Transfer of Responsibilities to the Recipient State

In order to sustain the results of humanitarian demining efforts, responsibility and ownership for clearing landmines needs to be transferred to the recipient countries at the earliest opportunity. In all three countries reviewed, national demining institutions have developed and are willing to take political and operational responsibility for demining. However, except for Bosnia and Herzegovina, they lack the managerial capacity and policy skills to do so. While international NGOs, including those supported by the Netherlands, have built considerable demining capacity at operational level, management capacity at national, provincial and municipal levels remained weak, particularly in Angola and Cambodia. The extent to which demining NGOs cooperate or support national demining institutions and authorities varied: in Angola, demining organisations worked almost entirely separately from governmental demining authorities considering coordination a bit of a nuisance while there was close coordination and cooperation in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Dutch financial assistance for humanitarian demining has almost exclusively been directed at actual mine clearance. In Angola and Cambodia, no support was given, either directly or indirectly, to develop and strengthen a national capacity to manage and direct demining efforts. In Bosnia and Herzegovina, the situation was different as Dutch funds were routed through UNDP which decided to allocate funds to the development of national mine action centres. This has built a strong foundation for local ownership. There is no doubt that actual mine clearance is key to initial humanitarian efforts and providing emergency relief. However, as the economy picks up and the country stabilises, it is necessary to develop national capacities so responsibility for mine action can be transferred to the recipient state. In all three countries, the political will to take this responsibility exists. Exclusive donor support to international organisations to do mine clearance without strengthening, or at least supporting the national capacity impedes the transfer of responsibilities to the recipient state. More serious efforts to include national policy planning are required if national authorities are ever to take over for good.
4 Conclusions

Dutch policy on humanitarian demining lacked strategic vision and did not adapt to the changing realities on the ground. Rather, policy objectives were defined so broadly that it was difficult to find any Dutch-funded demining activity entirely irrelevant from a donor’s perspective.

Given the magnitude of the mine problem, the importance of humanitarian demining will not diminish. However, donor policy will have to reflect that these activities will look different in the future. This is not only due to the fact that large quantities of mines have been cleared, but more importantly, because the thinking about of demining activities and the significance of land use as a measure of results has changed fundamentally over the last ten years. This evaluation shows that emergency-type mine clearance has gradually given way to a more long-term development perspective, where policy-makers and practitioners can work with an increasing variety of priorities, procedures and technologies to define the most suitable mine action.

The presence of mines is one of the impediments to development and post-conflict recovery and should be regarded as such in defining demining interventions and development assistance to mine-affected countries. In recent years, a number of unique participatory approaches have been developed by demining organisations and proved a crucial step to create a better understanding of local development needs. In order to make participation pay off in the long-run, it is key to encourage an improved integration between a donor’s national planning processes and policy priorities and the realities on the ground; the issue of relevance for all parties concerned is still at the core of the mine problem. While this trend is indeed positive, there is a long way to go still. The three case studies have shown that, given the mostly limited capacities on national level, donor support will have to remain part of these efforts for some time to come.

Dutch policy consistently prioritised mine clearance, with a view to casualty reduction and socio-economic development. Capacity-building was a secondary policy objective. This evaluation merits the conclusion that even at the early stages of demining interventions, building national capacity to manage, direct and regulate demining is crucial to the sustainability of demining interventions and to overall recovery and development.

This evaluation has looked at the relevance, effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability of Dutch-supported demining interventions. In Angola and Cambodia, demining interventions were particularly relevant from a donor’s perspective and suited local priorities, while in Bosnia and Herzegovina demining activities were more relevant to national authorities. This had clear consequences: the fact that national capacities in Angola and Cambodia are not in a position to sustain their demining operations without donor assistance makes them above all dependent on the good work delivered by international operators.

Looking at the short-term, mine clearance in Angola and Cambodia were highly effective (less efficient in the case of Angola, due to the war), whereas the effect and efficiency of mine clearance in Bosnia and Herzegovina was lower. As regards capacity-building, Cambodia benefited from initial donor support to capacity-building at the national level. This is also true for Angola, but because of the renewed outbreak
of war, effectiveness and efficiency were lower. The long-term effects of mine clearance are positive in Angola and Cambodia in contrast to Bosnia and Herzegovina, where the impact of capacity-building is more evident. In Cambodia, these efforts have led to substantial improvements in operational capacities and, in more recent years, have been increasingly integrated in national coordination schemes.

It can be concluded that – irrespective of donor policies – realities on the ground and the particular approaches of individual demining organisations dictated the way mine clearance was carried out. This is not necessarily a bad thing, but the question remains whether policy frameworks should not change as a consequence: the findings of this evaluation suggest that there is limited added value of overall donor guidelines if there is no conceptual agreement on how the interrelationship between mine clearance, casualty reduction, socio-economic development and capacity-building can be addressed. If the situation in-country should be the basis of donor decisions, current policy frameworks do not necessarily help in steering policy-choices in humanitarian demining.

On a related note, it should be said that for all discussed aspects of humanitarian demining, budget allocations are critical to a more sustainable donor policy. It is high time for greater integration between humanitarian demining and the wider development agenda, both on donor policy level as well as in the recipient country. This cannot be achieved without the necessary de-separation of budget lines that control international funding schemes.
5 Recommendations

- To review the existing Framework for Humanitarian Demining (2004) to include i) a strategic vision on humanitarian demining, ii) demonstrate an understanding of the needs of recipient countries and iii) reflect a comprehensive and realistic risk-based approach to demining and development incorporating lessons learned from financial assistance to demining activities.

- To mainstream humanitarian mine action into emergency humanitarian aid and development assistance, at policy and operational level, in the donor as well as the recipient state. In-country, mine action should be part of a national Poverty Reduction Strategy (PRSP) or national development plans and priorities of Dutch-funded NGOs should be tied to national development goals. At the ministry level, humanitarian mine action should be an integrated component of reconstruction and development plans and budgets for mine-affected countries.

- To regularly monitor ongoing demining activities with a view to flexibly adapt donor support for demining activities to reflect the changing realities on the ground and to provide the relevant Embassy with adequate resources to do so. Alternatively, monitoring could be shared among 'like-minded' donors.

- To undertake a prior assessment and define indicators of impact and effectiveness of the intervention ex-ante, in order to enhance the effectiveness of mine action interventions.

- To critically review reporting by organisations financially supported by the Netherlands with a view to assessing progress and to maximising effectiveness of the demining efforts.

- To develop a methodology to monitor and evaluate the impact of demining interventions in the context of humanitarian assistance and development, including the development of analytical tools and indicators to regularly measure progress and inform policy decision-making.

- To enhance efficiency by supporting the development and application of risk assessment and other inclusive approaches (conflict analysis) to humanitarian demining, aimed at threat area reduction and prioritisation of demining tasks, taking into account socio-economic development needs.

- To give more priority to capacity-building at the management and policy level and strengthening national and local institutions in mine-affected countries, particularly where the political will to take responsibility exists, in order to transfer responsibilities, at the earliest opportunity, to the recipient state.

- To support multi-donor multi-year programmes to build national capacity.

- To support participatory approaches to humanitarian demining, such as the use of community liaison teams and the development of processes that ensure local community participation in the prioritisation of clearance tasks. In this light, the
establishment of registries of landownership in the recipient countries should also be supported, in order to resolve landownership questions related to demined land.

- To continue to financially assist HALO Trust, MAG and NPA, as professional and competent organisations in mine action, on condition that they link their activities with development to development initiatives, and to strengthen their capacity to apply an integrated approach to demining and development.

- To select Dutch-funded activities on the basis of prior socio-economic and technical assessment, to determine where mine activities will be most cost-effective.

- Not to rule out supporting demining by military deminers or commercial demining organisations where this is more efficient or relevant from a recipient country’s perspective.
Endnotes

i  *Landmine Monitor Report: Towards a Mine-Free World*, Executive Summary, 2006, p.5. It is estimated that there are between 30-300 million landmines worldwide. These estimates are widely regarded as too high. The UN puts the figure closer to 100 million mines worldwide.


iii  The selection of these three countries was made by IOB.


viii  Amendment to the Annual Budget of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs for the Year 2000, House of Representatives Document nr. 27 162, nr. 8.

ix  Compliance with international mine action standards (IMAS standards) and compatibility with national or international plans for socio-economic rehabilitation (Consolidated Appeals, Poverty Reduction Strategies) are prerequisite for programmatic assistance. In principle, only countries that have ratified the Ottawa Convention and where an environment conducive to mine clearance exists are eligible for Dutch financial assistance. In terms of activities, Mine Risk Education is given lesser priority while Research and Development and commercial demining enterprises will not be subsidised.


xi  The European Commission considers mine action to be an important political priority in the context of promoting peace and stability. The policy objective of its most recent Mine Action Strategy is the “zero victim target.” The Strategy emphasises victim assistance, mine risk education and national and local capacity building. The EC has adopted two Mine Action Strategies, 2002-2004 and 2005-2007.

xii  IMAS 4.10.

xiii  The same observation was made in the Evaluation of the Stability Fund (Evaluatie Stabiliteitsfonds 2004 en 2005), February 2007 which criticised the lack of monitoring and evaluation of Dutch interventions, as well as the lack of critical review of reporting on Dutch funded activities. p. 28.

xiv  Keeley, R., *The Economics of Landmine Clearance*, September 2006, p. 110. This graph is based on Keeley (2006) and has been changed by HCSS for this report.

xv  This graph is based on Keeley (2006) and has been changed by HCSS for this report.
Keeley, R., p.118.

Discussion with IOB prior to field mission, June 2007.

Comparable evaluations by other organisations had substantially more time, particularly in the preparatory phase. See for instance Evaluation of UNICEF’s Support to Mine Action, June 2006.

The Cambodian Prime Minister has declared achieving Mine Impact Free status by 2012 a key policy objective. See Country Report Cambodia, HCSS-2007-004.

See also Ruth Bottomley, Community Participation in Mine Action, A Review and Conceptual Framework, Norwegian People’s Aid, December 2005.


A Study in Community Liaison in Mine Action, Norwegian People’s Aid, May 2007.


Annex 1 – Angola

Executive Summary

From 1996 to 2006, the Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) spent a total of € 24.5 million on humanitarian mine action in Angola. The main beneficiaries of this financial assistance included five (international) non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and, at an earlier stage, UNICEF. No direct financial support was channelled to any government institution or Angolan operators. The evaluation team reviewed and analysed all relevant documentation and conducted interviews with government institutions, UN agencies, national and international relief and development agencies, local authorities, and members of affected communities. In Angola, field visits included all five NGOs and a number of selected sites in six out of eighteen provinces, namely Bengo, Bié, Huambo, Kwanza Norte, Malanje and Moxico. In all inspected areas, mine clearance operations had either already been completed or are still under way at the time of writing.

Findings

In general, humanitarian demining activities funded by the Netherlands during Angola’s different phases of peace and war have contributed to the country’s reconstruction and peacebuilding efforts. At a time when the Angolan government could not provide short-term assistance to IDPs and refugees affected by mine hazards, the clear focus of these activities on humanitarian needs and targeting the needs of local communities significantly contributed to increased safety and boosting resettlement.

Official demining priorities in Angola do not necessarily match local needs. Despite the existence of a national policy framework and annual planning procedures at various levels, the work of NGOs is insufficiently integrated into national policies. This means that NGO agendas and actual work plans are determined to a large extent by the needs and concerns of local communities, on the one hand, and the demands of their international donors, on the other.

As the operating environments in Angola vary considerably, it is difficult to make a clear assessment on whether and to what extent HMA activities have been carried out in an efficient way. Not only did Angola undergo phases of peace, war and again peace during the evaluation period, circumstances in Angola also differ greatly from province to province and from time to time, be it in terms of distances, living conditions, national capacities, political dynamics or bureaucratic hurdles. Given this setting, it should be noted that all four evaluated NGOs have been and still put much effort in working as efficient as possible.

Benefits to the local populations can be judged as sufficiently sustainable. Outputs match the given objectives of the various operations and a substantial part of contaminated land plots have been put to use again after mine clearance ended. Exceptions include cases of temporary reception areas that needed clearing at the time, but which have been abandoned since.

The training of deminers by NGOs has contributed to capacity-building at the operational level. However, due to the difficult no-peace-no-war-situation in Angola and the
changing priorities of the MFA during those years, this has not been a consistent effort. Funds were reduced or discontinued after 1998 and created major disruptions in national efforts to institutionalise the necessary expertise within Angola. As a result, the transfer of responsibilities to national authorities and phasing out of the need for international NGOs is still a long way off and must be addressed as soon as possible. If not, there is an even greater risk of not achieving the already ambitious goal stated in the National Strategic Plan to “solve” a large part of Angola’s mine and UXO problem by 2011.

Conclusions

Dutch demining policy towards Angola have above all been determined by other considerations than a careful analysis of the needs on the ground. The latter would have been even the more relevant given the fragile nature of the peace process and the rapidly changing circumstances in different parts of the country. Despite this lack of a coherent, integrated policy and ever-decreasing monitoring capacities, Dutch-supported mine action in Angola has generally been relevant, effective and efficient. It had a positive influence on the livelihoods of affected populations, contributed to a boost in return and resettlement, rehabilitation, free movement of people and goods and enhanced the general feeling of security in the provinces concerned.

Angola has been able, especially in the post-2002 period, to set up an institutional framework for humanitarian demining, with components for policymaking and implementation at national and provincial levels – as detailed in a Strategic Plan 2006-2011. In practice, however, the system still faces many problems, due to a lack of human capacity (technical and managerial) as well as a lack of transparency and accountability. As a result of weak national institutions, the INGOs have by far been the most effective contributors to building national capacities in the area of humanitarian mine action in Angola. This holds particularly true for operational expertise in clearance techniques. In fact, most Angolan deminers and senior demining staff, whether working for Angolan organisations or not, have been employed and trained by either one of the INGOs. What has been less successful so far is the full transfer of responsibilities to national bodies.

Regarding the general trend in the mining sector, there is a definite move away from the idea that for people to live and work safely, humanitarian mine action should focus on the actual removing of all mines and UXO. “Smart demining” and solutions-based approaches are being explored and tested, with the active participation of local communities. In fact, many communities consider mines as “just” another hazard they have to live with, while other problems might be more important to their minds. This notion could lead to a changing role for demining organisations in the mid-term, from technical disposal to a more integrated community-inspired development.

On a more conceptual level, it is useful to capture these findings in a simple graph. For this purpose, figure 1 combines the four chapters on relevance, effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability, dividing them into a short- and a long-term overview (left for short-term, right for long-term), and features an indicator for the qualitative 'score' on relevance (triangle below). In both upper quadrants, score indicators are given by a green cross (for mine clearance) and a blue octagon (for capacity-building). These scores show to what extent short-term goals (effectiveness in relation to efficiency) and long-term goals (effectiveness in relation to sustainability) have been achieved in the
period under consideration (indicated as high versus low). In the additional graph below, a purple circle inside the triangle stands for the relevance of the evaluated activities for either donor policies, national or local interests. Even though this presentation falls short of reflecting the underlying dynamics and the unique details of this case study, it allows for a more aggregate view on the way Dutch HMA activities have turned out over the years.

![Diagram of Republic of Angola](image)

Figure 1 Visualisation of findings.

**Recommendations**

On the basis of the evaluation of the humanitarian assistance by the MFA to HMA activities in Angola over the years 1996-2006, the evaluation team presents the following recommendations:

- Reconsider the decision to terminate all financial assistance to HMA in Angola by the end of 2007. Given the scale of the remaining mine/UXO problem in the country, there is still a great deal to be done. National authorities should be supported by the international community, in combination with INGOs that can and – due to lacking capacity on national level to date – must play their part in addressing the humanitarian needs of the most vulnerable communities.

- Redefine the objectives as well as the beneficiaries of its financial assistance. Angola’s Mine Action Strategic Plan 2006-2011 should serve as the key reference in this regard.

- Ensure regular monitoring activities, preferably by proxy. This could be done for example by joining up with other like-minded donor agencies.

- Integrate demining efforts in existing development plans for the province in question in order to ensure sustainable impact. If none such plan exists, encourage national or local authorities to do so before demining funds are being granted.
Annex 2 – Bosnia-Herzegovina

Executive Summary

Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH) is widely considered to be the most mine contaminated country in Europe and one of the most affected in the world. As a result of the inter-ethnic war from 1992 to 1995, following the break-up of the former Socialist Republic of Yugoslavia, it is estimated that about one million mines have been abandoned. These ordnances currently block access to about 4% of the land area of the country, including economically important agricultural and forest land. However, there is a trend of decreasing casualties and UXO accidents since 1996 with now 30 people per year killed or injured.

Since the Dayton Peace agreements in 1995, the country has been marked by a complex political structure: the country is comprised of two “entities” – the Republika Srpska and the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina – and one autonomous district, Brcko. It is in this context that emergency mine clearance started in 1996, including the active involvement by various NGOs and UN agencies. The Netherlands has been contributing to the initial clearance by NPA, and subsequently financed UNDP’s multi-donor programmes. In this 10 year period, a total of about USD six million has been given for Humanitarian Mine Action (HMA), accounting to ca. 2% of the total contribution of the Netherlands to BiH and ca. 5% of international contributions to mine action in the country.

This report presents the findings of the evaluation mission conducted from 14 - 29 June 2007. Meetings were held with key stakeholders and field visits were made throughout the territory of BiH. Because the bulk of the Dutch money went to capacity-building, the evaluation team visited six of the regional offices of the Bosnia and Herzegovina Mine Action Centre (BHMAC) and meetings were held with the local staff. Additionally, the team visited 5 sites cleared with Dutch money because, although clearance was only a minor part in the total funding of Humanitarian Mine Action (HMA) in BiH.

Findings

From its inception in the mid-90’s, the focus of the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs’ demining policy was to support immediate mine clearance activities in order to reduce mine victims and to promote socio-economic development. In line with its general preference for multilateral programmes, the Netherlands decided, except for its ad hoc funding to Norwegian Peoples Aid (NPA) – not to engage in bilateral donorship and chose to fund a UN agency in order to execute demining activities in BiH. As part of this policy, the UNDP has since 1998 been given structural funding for its programmes on building capacity in support of clearance and other mine action activities.

The UNDP supported the development of the Bosnia and Herzegovina Mine Action Centre (BHMAC) and worked towards the establishment of a single national level authority in 2002. As a result of the UNDP programme, the BHMAC currently has a national office, two sub offices and eight regional offices and is responsible for planning, prioritising, mapping, quality management and hand-over of cleared areas. It also maintains the national database. Both national authorities and locals benefited from the creation of this MAC scheme. These results are notable achievements in a deeply
divided society – the more as the BHMAC is regarded as one of only three institutions capable that works in all regions of the country.

The Netherlands originally envisaged a demining programme with a primary focus on immediate mine clearance in order to improve people’s livelihoods. The programmes evaluated in this report show that mine clearance has in fact taken place, but that clearance operations remained very limited in numbers. The UNDP programme in fact gave preference to institutional capacity-building activities and only started to clear – a very limited number of – mines in 2005, seven years after the programmes’ initiation. In other words, the Netherlands HMA programme proved to be effective in its support to capacity-building in BiH, even though this was not the principal policy objective. Through its partnership with UNDP, the Netherlands therefore supported the creation of a high-quality institution capable of organising and quality controlling mine clearance, the BHMAC. In the medium-run, this had a positive effect on the overall post-conflict reconstruction process in BiH.

The choice by MFA to opt for UNDP resulted in a significant distance between the donor on the one hand and the executing agency on the other. This hands-off approach contributed to an efficient implementation of its demining policy. As it is outside the scope of this evaluation to provide a clear-cut assessment of the UNDP’s internal level of efficiency, there are no insights as to whether performance could have been different. Also, it should be noted that there were no reviews done in the evaluation period that could have provided information about potential problems or improvements.

One of the HMA activities’ major shortfalls stems from a very limited link between demining activities and a more holistic development agenda. While there are various policy documents that clearly state the intention of promoting a more integrated approach, the evaluation team did not find indications of this being implemented in practice. Related to this, there is little or no recognition of the nature of the “landmine problem” as being essentially an economic issue – and hence related to economic development, the main recipient of Dutch funding. This problem is closely connected to the issue of sustainability.

As far as capacity-building is concerned, there are positive developments. While certainly not perfect, the BHMAC can be regarded as a successful and functional national mine action centre. Indeed, the existence of a single national system working across the whole national territory is in itself a remarkable achievement which has an – albeit small – positive impact in the areas of peacebuilding and reconciliation.

In the long-term, the evolution of the BHMAC and its current prioritisation system is also at the forefront of a more general international move towards a “risk based approach” to mine action which seeks to address key risks and to establish acceptable levels of residual risk. This may, eventually, allow a reduction in casualties by allocating limited resources more quickly to where they are most needed.

The evaluation team found that both monitoring and evaluation were notably weak. There was no monitoring of any specific site that had been cleared after one or three years to find out if they were being used. At the same time, it must be noted that the overall programme monitoring was, contractually, the responsibility of the Embassy in Sarajevo. This was not done in during the evaluation period, and reporting by the UNDP itself was weak. In addition, there was no evidence found of feedback from the experience gained in implementing the programme being used to establish lessons learned.
Conclusions

The UNDP programmes had a different focus in comparison with the Netherlands’ principal demining objective. Still, the former received some 90% of the total MFA funding in the ten years up to 2006 and managed to set up an entire mine action system. However, mine clearance was in fact neglected to a large extent. This leads to the more fundamental question whether the existing MFA guidelines for demining still reflect today’s development agenda. In fact, the effectiveness, efficiency and impact of the undertaken activities could have suffered significantly had mine clearance been the primary focus of UNDP’s engagement in BiH.

In terms of monitoring and evaluation, it is clear that the lack of monitoring activities could have been prevented. The contractual obligations on the part of the Embassy should have been communicated before the finalisation of the contract between The Hague and UNDP. The fact that the Embassy was not involved in this process resulted in insufficient staff capacity at mission level and to the virtual non-existence of any type of quality safeguard for the supported demining activities.

On a more conceptual level, it is useful to capture these findings in a simple graph. For this purpose, figure 1 combines the four chapters on relevance, effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability, dividing them into a short- and a long-term overview (left for short-term, right for long-term), and features an indicator for the qualitative ‘score’ on relevance (triangle below). In both upper quadrants, score indicators are given by a green cross (for mine clearance) and a blue octagon (for capacity-building). These scores show to what extent short-term goals (effectiveness in relation to efficiency) and long-term goals (effectiveness in relation to sustainability) have been achieved in the period under consideration (indicated as high versus low). In the additional graph below, a purple circle inside the triangle stands for the relevance of the evaluated activities for either donor policies, national or local interests. Even though this presentation falls short of reflecting the underlying dynamics and the unique details of this case study, it allows for a more aggregate view on the way Dutch HMA activities have turned out over the years.

Figure 1 Visualisation of findings.
Recommendations

The evaluation team suggests to follow-up on a number of inter-linked aspects in order to anticipate future HMA activities in BiH.

− Update current demining policy: it is necessary to review the current policy framework, reflecting on the experiences gathered from past HMA activities. If not in general, this is certainly the case for BiH.

− Ensure adequate agreements on monitoring. There is no need for costly monitoring schemes, however it should be clear that the non-existence thereof certainly has negative consequences for both current and future activities. In the case of BiH, MFA today faces a ten year funding scheme with little if no institutional lessons learned that could have – in retrospect – been used for adjustments along the way.

− Innovate demining strategies. On a more general level, HMA activities will have to depart from a narrow focus on mine action per se, towards a more holistic understanding of the problem at hand. Such an integrate approach would have to acknowledge the critical link between local development needs and short-term objectives. This has thus far been a more theoretical exercise and needs a more hands-on, less risk-avert attitude by funding agencies.
Annex 3 – Cambodia

Executive Summary

In Cambodia, the scope of the landmine problem is still enormous. Almost all mines stem from the period between mid-1960s and late 1990s. Estimates of their total number vary from 2 to 6 million mines, most of them concentrated in the northern, eastern and western parts of the country. Despite the signing of the Paris Agreements of 1991 by the various warring parties, it was not until 1998 that each faction abandoned armed struggle and access to mine-affected areas has long remained difficult. Nonetheless, mine operators could extend their activities throughout the country over time, as the situation stabilised.

The Netherlands has been a key player in mine action in Cambodia since the early 1990s. Over the period 1996-2004 the Netherlands has been the third largest donor to mine action in Cambodia, with a share of 9% of the total international funding for mine action in Cambodia. Netherlands funding for the period 1996-2006 totalled 16.1 million EUR.

This report presents the findings of the evaluation mission conducted from 19 June – 10 July 2007. Meetings were held with key stakeholders and field visits were made throughout Cambodia.

Findings

The Netherlands had no specific humanitarian demining policy with respect to Cambodia, but the funded humanitarian demining activities reflected the overall Netherlands demining policy-frameworks. The evaluation team did not find any coordinated integration between Netherlands funded humanitarian demining activities and Netherlands’ development assistance. While termination of the development partnership in 1998 led to an exit-strategy for development assistance from 2004 to 2006, this did not affect the funding for demining activities. Because of the demining activities were broad in scope, they also reflected the policy priorities of the Cambodian government: to link mine clearance efforts with socio-economic development activities while at the same time targeting the worst contaminated mine areas in order to reduce casualties. In fact, this allowed the Cambodian authorities to incorporate the different approaches advocated by the various donors and INGOs.

Since 1996, and especially since 2002, there have been major improvements in the process of priority setting and task selection for humanitarian demining in a decentralised, bottom-up manner. Over the period 1996-2006, Netherlands funded humanitarian demining activities thus increasingly took place in accordance with the priorities, needs and wishes of the affected communities. Netherlands’ funds were not used to support the development of this process.

Likewise, Dutch funded demining activities played no significant role in national capacity building after direct funding to the Cambodian Mine Action Centre (CMAC) was terminated in 1999 due to financial mismanagement. The Netherlands decided to re-allocate its funding to two organisations with a more operational focus. Consequently, in more recent years, Netherlands funding contributed to clearance for
immediate casualty reduction (HALO Trust) as well as clearance targeting at socio-economic development (CMAC through NPA). Despite progress in recent years, the national mine action authority is not yet working effectively. After 2000, the Cambodian Government put in place a national regulation body, the so-called Cambodian Mine Action and Victim Assistance Authority (CMAA). CMAA had limited funding from the start, which slowed its progress considerably. CMAA lacks the necessary resources – human as well as technological – to fulfill this role without external assistance. At the same time, all operators in the field clearly indicated their willingness to cooperate with CMAA and emphasised the benefits of CMAA being capable of running a nationwide database on contaminated and cleared land. This would facilitate a more efficient data-exchange between the operators and eventually remove the need for the operators to dispatch surveying teams of their own. The Netherlands, however, has not provided funding for the development of CMAA, nor to the development of the decentralised, bottom-up process of priority setting and task selection for mine clearance.

With regard to the efficiency of Netherlands funded humanitarian demining activities, both CMAC and HALO Trust provide value for money. Mine clearance is conducted in a responsible manner following standard operating procedures. HALO Trust’s monitoring and focus on productivity is particularly tight. The evaluation team was not able to confirm the value added of NPA as an intermediary for the funding provided to CMAC. Whereas NPA was chosen for its integration of mine action and development activities, the Netherlands did not stop its support to NPA when it decided to abandon its involvement in development activities in 2003.

Netherlands monitoring activities decreased over time and became very limited after 2003. Prior, the Netherlands closely monitored the progress of the demining carried out by organisations funded by the Netherlands. In the post 2003 period, monitoring of the progress of HMA was merely done on the basis of desk-review of the reports sent in by the demining organisations.

The Dutch funded humanitarian demining activities have had a positive impact on land use in general. The cleared areas that the evaluators visited were intensively used for housing, gardens, agricultural crop production and for infrastructure. In most cases, the reclaimed lands have contributed to the socio-economic development of the affected communities. As regards casualty rates, Netherlands’ funding contributed to the decrease in the casualty rate, from 2,293 in 1997 to 189 in 2006.

Currently, the majority of the mine-related accidents occur in the highly contaminated K5-belt. The sustained efforts of the national government and the international community continue to show results and there is a general feeling that eventually a mine-impact free status can be achieved in Cambodia. This notwithstanding, a large number of people continue to live in minefields driven by socio-economic motivations, as a substantial number of plots of land remain uncleared. In some cases this is a deliberate risk taking strategy through which people hope to get ownership of the land after mine clearance. Disputes about ownership have been reported, partly due to the fact that the Cambodian government has so far not provided the legal framework to guarantee proper documentation for land rights.
**Conclusions**

The Netherlands’ decision to concentrate its funding on two demining operators in Cambodia has had positive outcomes. However, rather than the result of a strategy on the part of the Netherlands, these positive results should be ascribed to the progress made in terms of demining practices within the Cambodian demining community.

In supporting the humanitarian demining effort in Cambodia, the Netherlands government faced the question whether and how much to contribute to the building of national institutional capacity, and how much to mine clearance. The Netherlands initially opted for the creation of national capacity by funding the national operator CMAC, but confronted with a lack of transparency and financial inconsistencies in 1999, it shifted course. Since 1999, only a small portion of Netherlands’ funding has contributed to capacity-building other than at the operational level. Netherlands’ funding has not contributed to the creation of today’s MAPU/PMAC structure nor to the national authority CMAA, both of which the evaluation team deems essential to sustain the results of demining activities in Cambodia.

There is an ongoing debate in Cambodia about whether and how to integrate demining with broader development goals. However, the immediate gains of mine clearance in terms of humanitarian assistance should not be underestimated. In particular, HALO Trust’s narrow focus on mine clearance in the highest contaminated areas has significantly increased the number of mines lifted and it can be assumed to have made an efficient and tangible contribution to the decrease in casualty rates in Cambodia. Although HALO’s activities in the highest contaminated areas largely took place outside an integrated approach, they contributed to the decrease in casualty rates while no valuable demining capacity was wasted clearing land with only little contamination. For future HMA efforts however, better coordination is needed if socio-economic improvements in the long run are to be guaranteed.

On a more conceptual level, it is useful to capture these findings in a simple graph. For this purpose, figure 1 combines the four chapters on relevance, effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability, dividing them into a short- and a long-term overview (left for short-term, right for long-term), and features an indicator for the qualitative 'score' on relevance (triangle below). In both upper quadrants, score indicators are given by a green cross (for mine clearance) and a blue octagon (for capacity-building). These scores show to what extent short-term goals (effectiveness in relation to efficiency) and long-term goals (effectiveness in relation to sustainability) have been achieved in the period under consideration (indicated as high versus low). In the additional graph below, a purple circle inside the triangle stands for the relevance of the evaluated activities for either donor policies, national or local interests. Even though this presentation falls short of reflecting the underlying dynamics and the unique details of this case study, it allows for a more aggregate view on the way Dutch HMA activities have turned out over the years.
Cambodia’s mine contamination remains severe, despite the fact that mine-related accidents have diminished over recent years. The sustained efforts of the Cambodian Government and the international community continue to show results and there is a general feeling that a mine impact free status can be achieved. For the Netherlands to make its donor efforts towards the Cambodian HMA sector sustainable, the following policy options should be considered:

- Prioritise casualty reduction in the K5-belt through actual mine clearance and other assistance. Although the drop in casualties is very good news, a number of 450 casualties (189 of which are mine-related) accidents in 2006 supports the view that humanitarian demining in the K5-belt should still remain a priority.

- Provide support to the CMAA in order to strengthen its capacity to coordinate the demining effort and manage a national database.

- Support the establishment of registries for land ownership in order to help avoid and resolve conflicts over land. Such assistance would fit in an integrated approach and the OECD’s good governance agenda.

- Refrain from using desk reviews as the sole means of monitoring. Desk review of reports and evaluations cannot substitute for insight gained by on-site inspections. The evaluation team recommends that demining policy should be based on a clear understanding of the situation on the ground. This can be also be achieved through joint monitoring efforts by like-minded donors.

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**Figure 1** Visualisation of findings.

**Recommendations**

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