



HANDBOOK FOR **CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT IN MINE ACTION**



UNITED NATIONS DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME

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Handbook for Capacity Development in Mine Action



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The mine action sector has evolved dramatically since the late 1980s when humanitarian clearance efforts began in Afghanistan and a nascent advocacy movement to ban these indiscriminate weapons started to take root. Since then, the world has seen significant changes to international law, technological advances, and the emergence of an entirely new professional sector at the nexus of humanitarian, development and peace, replete with its own complex apparatus, standards and norms.

Yet two factors have barely changed over these same decades. First, there are simply never enough resources to adequately protect civilians from the humanitarian impact of explosive ordnance, and certainly not as quickly as the local population requires. Even the best resourced programmes take years to meet all national priorities and the requirements of international treaties.

Second, notwithstanding the success of international agreements in reducing the use of landmines and cluster munitions, there appears to be no end to the use of explosive weapons without regard to their long-term humanitarian and development consequences. Each year, improvised explosive devices, unexploded ordnance and other forms of random contamination add to the global count of explosive ordnance, even as the last of the 'classic minefields' are cancelled out.

Mine action is, and will remain, a long-term endeavour. The negative humanitarian and development consequences of explosive ordnance have been well documented over the decades, as has the corresponding benefit of a strong mine action response.¹ Socio-economic impact surveys and post-clearance assessments demonstrate the positive results of mine action on agriculture, nutrition, water and sanitation, commerce through road clearance, and other development sectors. As patterns of explosive ordnance contamination change, so does the development impact of contamination. The socio-economic impact of mined agricultural land is different from that of large amounts of explosive ordnance – often randomly located – in urban areas, requiring new approaches to prioritization. Mine action continues to evolve.

Irrespective of context, over the long term, mine action is most sustainable and effective when it is nationally owned and managed. In fact, applying the principles of national ownership during a crisis response will make it easier to ensure that national ownership is in place during the development phase. This is recognized by the United Nations adoption of the principle of "supporting national mine action institutions to effectively lead and manage mine action functions and responsibilities" as one of three Strategic Outcomes in its Strategy for Mine Action 2019–2023.²

UNDP AND CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT

Capacity development is at the core of UNDP's mandate within the United Nations system and also at the core of its role within the mine action sector.³ UNDP's presence at the country level before, during and after a conflict or crisis establishes the relations and infrastructure required to support governments in establishing new structures, if required, and strengthening existing ones.

Capacity development efforts are ongoing each and every day in countries where UNDP and partners provide mine action support. However, at times these are disparate activities, focused almost primarily on training, which fail to produce the anticipated, long-term results. Programmes may 'reinvent the wheel', or replicate initiatives from one country that simply do not produce comparable results in another; a 'cookie-cutter' approach to capacity development does not work. A common framework for action and analysis across mine action programmes can help to remedy this, provided it is contextualized for each country and situation. This is what this Handbook is about.

The purpose of these guidelines is to capture the wealth of UNDP's experience in developing capacities across a broad variety of development sectors, and incorporate experience and lessons derived specifically from mine action and weapons programming, and translate them into the current mine action context. It lays out a systematic and comprehensive framework for capacity development in mine action that is valid across organizations and countries.⁴

The guidance in this Handbook is intended for the entire mine action sector. However, because UNDP's mine action capacity development work typically focuses on national institutions, specifically the National Mine Action Authority⁵ and the National Mine Action Centre,⁶ this Handbook focuses on this institutional level and uses them as illustrations, and does not focus on the operational mine action response. Nevertheless, the framework and principles are equally applicable to national and international operators, and implementing partner organizations.

Similarly, the framework and guidelines in this Handbook can be applied in any context, including during an immediate crisis response. Although the details, priorities and emphasis of a capacity development response will be different in each country, the underlying principle of national ownership and sustainable national structures can be supported through this framework.

The mine action sector already benefits from a full array of international and national standards, meetings and reviews. This Handbook does not aim to create new structures or processes; it requires no gadgets and contains no startling inventions. The framework and guidance presented here have stood the test of time and proven effective across development sectors, including in many mine action programmes, and across cultures and contexts.



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This Handbook will respond to the following questions:

- 1) **Why** focus on capacity development?
- 2) **How** does the UNDP Capacity Development Framework apply to mine action?
- 3) **What** are we developing capacities for?
- 4) **How** do we assess where capacity development will have the most impact?
- 5) **Where** does capacity development fit into a results framework?
- 6) **What** are some proven programmatic responses for capacity development?

It is important to note that this document does not prescribe *who* should support or contribute to the development and strengthening of national capacities for mine action in any given country. **This decision rests with the national authorities**, and will vary from country to country. The mine action sector benefits from a broad spectrum of actors willing and able to contribute including United Nations agencies such as the United Nations Mine Action Service (UNMAS), United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research (UNIDIR), the Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining (GICHD), International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), regional centres, numerous international and national NGOs, as well as national institutions within the affected countries.

In Viet Nam, a competition, "Join hands in explosive ordnance risk education", was organized for primary school children to improve awareness and behavior.

Introducing the Capacity Development Framework

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Photo: UNMAS Colombia

A typical UNDP mine action programme is designed to support national mine action authorities and national mine action centres as coordinators and managers of a country's overall mine action response.⁷ UNDP does not create United Nations mine action structures parallel to the government, but works within national structures even in the immediate post-conflict period.⁸ In some instances, this means supporting the development of new national entities; in other countries, offices or units have been established within existing ministries or other structures.

Irrespective of the specific bureaucratic architecture, the key principle is that mine action management and coordination should be part of the government, and appropriate to the task at hand. Clearly, this will change over time. The national mine action architecture that is established during a conflict may no longer be fit-for-purpose to handle residual capacity decades later. Phasing out these specific mine action structures and integrating capacity into broader government structures will be appropriate in some cases.⁹

THE UNDP APPROACH TO CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT

We can think of capacities as the full set of resources and assets that are available to be applied toward the resolution of a problem or the achievement of a goal. Some of these will be tangible and fixed, such as laws, operational frame-

“UNDP sees capacity development as the process through which individuals, organizations and societies obtain, strengthen and maintain the capabilities to set and achieve their own development objectives over time. Simply put, if capacity is the means to plan and achieve, then capacity development describes the ways to these means. An essential ingredient in the UNDP capacity development approach is transformation. For an activity to meet the standard of capacity development as practiced and promoted by UNDP, it must bring about transformation that is generated and sustained over time from within.”

Source: Capacity Development: A UNDP Primer

If the vision of the mine programme in any given country is to save lives and release land for safe and productive civilian use, a corresponding vision for a capacity development programme could be that the country has a national mine action capacity that safely delivers results for civilians, functions effectively with minimal external support, and has the trust of stakeholders.

Designing and maintaining a capacity development programme that will be effective over the long term requires methodical and focused analysis of the full context of a mine action response and engagement with stakeholders throughout the process. It should consist of a balance of short terms actions and long-term, transformative goals. Most of all, it should be thoughtfully prioritized, practical and realistic. This can only happen if it is jointly developed with counterparts through a methodical, consultative, and iterative process. Not every facet of a mine

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