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Cover photo: Yemen’s first female deminer conducts her first single approach to a suspect object, © UNDP Yemen
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Handbook for Capacity Development in Mine Action
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. 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.

**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. 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.
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 Authority and the National Mine Action Centre, 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.

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
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. 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. 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.

**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 frameworks, and even physical assets, such as equipment. However, many others are more fluid, such as knowledge, social norms and human capacities. And, like everything having to do with humans, they are complex. This means that capacity development needs to be far more than training – it is a dynamic and systematic process of learning, strengthening and adapting that aims to make the response to a given situation more effective and responsive to the needs of stakeholders. It has no fixed end point. It is not a goal in and of itself, but a means to help achieve the outcomes and results defined for the mine action programme.

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 action programme has to win a gold medal; silver and bronze suffice for many functions. National authorities, mine action staff, international partners and donors may likely have different perspectives on which capacities require the most work. Finding – and maintaining – a consensus on the overall direction of the programme requires ongoing engagement.

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“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
After years of continuous war, millions of people in Yemen are hungry, ill, destitute, and acutely vulnerable. Cities and towns lie littered with explosive ordnance; infrastructure and means of livelihood have been destroyed or debilitated; and access to justice and confidence in the rule of law have eroded.

Mine Action in Yemen is firmly grounded as a development initiative, a precursor to stabilization, reconstruction and the establishment of effective governance. From the outset, it has sought to deliver services within the context of strengthening governance, whether it is through promoting a human rights-based approach to mine action, or creating a space for communities to report issues of concern within local governance networks. It also works closely with the international community to support humanitarian, peace and development initiatives.

With respect to rule of law, the mine action project’s initiative has supported the justice sector in the establishment of community policing initiatives, the development of safe evidential pathways to improve access to justice, and maritime risk reduction among the border force and Coast Guard.

In other development sectors, the mine action project works with government ministries, partner agencies and communities to establish access for much needed services such as water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH), food delivery, health, survivor assistance and infrastructure development (e.g. ports and airports) to promote internal and international commerce.

Women have been trained in explosive ordnance disposal, explosive ordnance risk education, and in conducting non-technical surveys. This helps to ensure that the needs of women, girls, boys and men are all reflected when dealing with the impact of explosive ordnance on their security and freedoms.

One pilot has been to work with communities to reduce the immediate threat posed by unexploded ordnance (UXO) and improvised explosive devices (IEDs) while focusing on access to decision-makers that can provide other services. This involved consultation with over 20,000 community members in the governorates of Hadramawt, Shabwah and Taizz. This promoted community policing, access to justice, and explosive ordnance risk education. Capacity development in the National Mine Action Authority in Hadramawt helped to reduce civilian casualties from explosive ordnance by 93 percent in 2020 compared to 2019, increased the capacity of the national authority to respond by 40 percent, and allowed communities to report issues of concern to local governance networks. This has enabled WASH projects to commence in otherwise contaminated areas along Yemen’s coastline, and has facilitated the training of police and training within the justice sector on evidence collection following explosive incidents. All of these are firsts for Yemen, underpinned by the willingness to learn more about the impact of explosive ordnance on society from a development, human rights and security perspective.
“Is there a specific moment in time when ‘capacity’ can be said to have ‘developed’ with respect to a given situation? When does, say, an engineering student actually become an engineer? Is it when she first understands the principles of engineering? When she passes the final exams? When she graduates? When she builds her own project? Or does she become an engineer at some point in between? Perhaps inconveniently for our era of precision measurements, capacity development rarely produces such a photo finish. Instead, capacity development is a perpetually evolving process of growth and positive change.”

THE CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK: A SYSTEM OF THREE INTEGRATED DIMENSIONS

The UNDP Capacity Development Framework classifies capacities in three dimensions.

There are capacities of individuals, and also of organizations or institutions as cohesive entities – not merely as the sum of individually held capacities of staff. In addition, capacities can be found throughout the broad enabling environment where they can exert a powerful positive influence (e.g. national mine action legislation) or negative influence (e.g. conflict).

The enabling environment is defined as “the broad social system within which people and organizations function. It includes all the rules, laws, policies, power relations and social norms that govern civic engagement.”

For mine action this equates to concrete legal elements such as the national mine action regulatory framework, national mine action strategy, whether or not the country is a signatory to the AP Mine Ban Convention, and whether or not it permits international NGOs to operate within its borders. It also includes less tangible yet extremely powerful elements such as the relationship and hierarchy between the ministers that sit on the national mine action steering committee, cultural dynamics, and social norms that determine the capacity of women, girls, boys and men to convey their concerns and their priorities to those in power.

The organizational and institutional level defines “the internal structure, policies and procedures that determine an organizations effectiveness”.

In a typical UNDP mine action programme, capacity development efforts will be focused on the governance and functioning of the national mine action authority and the national mine action centre with respect to prioritization, national mine action standards, accreditation, information management, tasking, quality assurance, donor relations, financial management, human resources, etc.

Capacities at the individual level comprise the “skills, experience and knowledge that allow each person to perform”.

Structured education and training are critical components of capacity development but are rarely sufficient on their own. Mentoring, on-the-job training, and the knowledge that individuals gain from experience in their field is what builds strong capacity over time. UNDP’s practice of co-locating its mine action staff within national structures has proven to be a valuable tool for capacity building over time.

The three dimensions interact and influence each other in a continuous loop. Both the organizational structure of an office and the enabling environment will influence how much individuals learn and, conversely, how much of their knowledge and experience is used to meaningfully contribute to overall goals and results.
The Role of the International Community in Three Dimensions

The role and conduct of international community is influential in all three dimensions. Good communication and coordination among donors, implementing partners, and United Nations agencies creates space within the enabling environment for national capacities to develop, while turf battles can have the opposite effect. At the organizational level, the creation of parallel coordination mechanisms can undermine national authority and weaken national capacities. Turnover of international staff – whether mine action technical staff, donor representatives or other relevant actors – changes the level of mine action knowledge and, therefore, capacity at the individual level.

STRENGTHENING CAPACITY IN ALL THREE DIMENSIONS

Strengthening capacity in only one dimension is not enough to produce consistent results.

Consider this scenario: The entire information management staff in a mine action centre has been trained to a very high level. And yet, INGOs report that the wait time continues to increase when they request maps and other data from the regional mine action offices. Communities complain that their priorities are being ignored. The World Bank senior representative is furious with the Minister of Health because she just learned that all access roads to a hospital scheduled for construction are suspected hazardous areas.

An integrated capacity development response works equally hard at removing the bottlenecks to effective information flow in the enabling environment and organizational structure as the information
management staff works to improve their individual skills. Well-trained and capable individuals can make best use of their knowledge and skills when they work in an environment where they are respected, and where systems are in place to organize work flow and ensure accountability.

DRIVERS OF CHANGE IN THE CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK

There is a myriad of programmatic actions that support capacity development, from how an office is organized, to secondments and the use of feedback and evaluation. For the sake of a coherent framework, these actions can be organized into four categories – drivers of change – that have proven to have the most impact on strengthening and sustaining capacities:

- Institutional arrangements: “the policies, practices and systems that allow for effective functioning of an organization or group. These may include ‘hard’ rules such as laws or the terms of a contract, or ‘soft’ rules like codes of conduct or generally accepted values”.
- Leadership: “the ability to influence, inspire and motivate others to achieve or even go beyond their goals. It is also the ability to anticipate and respond to change”.
- Knowledge: “or ‘literally’ what people know, underpins their capacities and hence capacity development”.  
- Accountability: “when rights holders are able to make duty bearers deliver on their obligations”.

These drivers of change are mutually reinforcing; weakness in one area can undermine efforts to strengthen capacities in another, and vice versa. For example, a programme may benefit from a highly capable and politically savvy leader, able to anticipate change, but if the institutional structures are too rigid, the overall programme will lack resilience. Moreover, no amount of training in technical areas will overcome a lack of accountability in the long
A comprehensive capacity development strategy will aim systematically to strengthen all four levers within the enabling environment, within mine action institutions and among individual staff.

DEVELOPING CAPACITIES FOR FUNCTIONS VERSUS TASKS

The last part of the Capacity Development Framework is the concept of developing functional capacities rather than uniquely focusing on tasks.

The International Mine Action Standards define a list of tasks for the management and coordination that are expected of National Mine Action Authorities and National Mine Action Centres. Programmes tend to fixate on the myriad tasks that national mine action entities are expected to accomplish at a high level of skill, and focus capacity development on improving skills related to these specific tasks. Strategic plans and national mine action standards need to be developed. National legislation should be drafted, negotiated and adopted. Information management and dissemination systems need to be established for Boards of Inquiry and for ensuring gender-appropriate programming.

Each one of these tasks is critical. However, across sectors, it has been established that assessing capacities for the five following functions produces more sustainable results than a focus on individual tasks.

- the capacity to engage stakeholders;
- the capacity to assess a situation and define a vision;
- the capacity to formulate policies and strategies;
- the capacity to budget, manage and implement;
- the capacity to evaluate.

Chapter Two builds out the approach to functional capacities within the mine action context. It provides a way for managers to better identify capacity gaps and bottlenecks in all three dimensions that weaken the results of even the most sophisticated training and mentoring programmes.
Building the Capacity Development Framework
After having introduced in Chapter One the three dimensions of capacities, the five functional capacities, and the four drivers of change to strengthen them, Chapter Two takes a closer look at the three dimensions of capacity in the mine action context and further develops the concept of functional capacities.

**A CLOSER LOOK AT THE THREE DIMENSIONS OF CAPACITY**

It is easy to lose sight of the big picture. We can be so focused on the immediate tasks in front of us that we fail to take into account the available capacities and systems that exist outside of the immediate mine action sphere that could contribute to meaningful results. And sometimes, managers are so confident that common sense actions will logically produce common sense results that they overlook forces that may in fact stand squarely in the way of progress.

In addition, in capacity development programming there is a natural tendency to focus on the individual and organizational levels. These are the areas where one can most clearly discern impact and over which technical advisers have more influence and even control. Training is conducted, and Standard Operating Procedures (SoPs), strategies and plans are produced and possibly disseminated. The bias towards short-term concrete action is amplified by the incessant demand for reports on results that can be measured and quantified.

To be clear, this is not to diminish the benefit of concrete short-term actions. Training, standing operating procedures and strategies all are essential. They are, however, insufficient to develop and sustain a national mine action capacity over the long term.

Mapping capacities within a country’s organizational dimensions can identify potential partners *with their own additional capacities* that can contribute to the strength of a programme even if outside of the immediate mine action sector. They can be applied to direct mine action activities, such as training the police in ordnance disposal according to national standards and incorporating their work into the national plan. Alternatively, in the opposite direction, the mine action sector can learn from others; for example, survey teams can be trained and mentored by local health workers on how best to approach communities with sensitive questions, and on how to bring the concerns of women, girls, boys and men – with or without disabilities – to the attention of the authorities.

Particular attention needs to be paid to mapping the enabling environment – the graveyard of many a well-intentioned capacity development initiative. Laws, policies and legislation are the backbone of the enabling environment for mine action. They may take decades to achieve but they are concrete and justifiably receive considerable attention and focus. However, equally powerful elements such as power dynamics and social norms are more amorphous and seem far outside the scope of mine action. To be sure, they are difficult to quantify and measure. All too often issues such as lack of resources and lack of political will are relegated to the heap of “risks and assumptions” at the bottom of a results framework – the basket of issues over which the mine action sector has little control.

However, this does not diminish the influence of social norms and power dynamics – including among members of the international community – on a mine action programme and on the strength of its national capacities. A realistic assessment of the full scope of the enabling environment is critical. Simply because factors are outside the sphere of influence of the mine action programme or appear completely intractable, this does not mean that they shouldn’t be explicitly factored into a capacity development strategy. One may not be able to solve the problem, but over time, one can probably reduce the negative impacts on effective mine action programming.

The following checklists are not exhaustive but intend to illustrate the broad scope of the enabling environment and organizational levels in most countries.
ENABLING ENVIRONMENT

National Policies, Laws, International Agreements, Power Dynamics and Social Norms

National mine action laws in addition to the following:

- Laws regulating the import of equipment and the transport by humanitarian mine action operators
- National budget for mine action
- Laws regarding the activities, including access, of international implementing partners
- Security policy/regulations for investigations of explosions
- Labour laws, including laws regulating the employment of women
- Laws for social protection, including disability and child protection
- Power dynamics between the national mine action authority, the national mine action centre, and also between these entities and other government bodies, such as the Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Education, security forces, the justice system and the military
- Power relations between prior (or current) parties to conflict, including non-state actors
- Social norms and cultural dynamics that facilitate access to affected communities, and those that create barriers. (Across all countries and contexts, gender and disability are likely to be prominent factors.)
- Complacency to risk among affected populations
- Power relations and dynamics between and among donors, including regional development banks
- Strength of relations within the United Nations Country Team, including the Bretton Woods Institutions
- Influence of regional coordination mechanisms and alliances

International Commitments

- Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention
- Convention on Cluster Munitions
- Geneva Call Deeds of Commitment
- Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities
- Convention on the Rights of the Child
- Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women
The approach to gender in mine action provides a clear example of the mine action community’s ability to challenge established social practice and norms in the enabling environment in order to better serve communities.

When humanitarian mine action began in Afghanistan in 1988, consideration of gender and diversity factors was limited at best. In many countries, due to social norms and cultural factors, women and girls are not allowed to attend public meetings or to meaningfully participate in discussions. As a result, they miss out on life-saving information and cannot contribute their perspective to prioritization. National laws in some contexts further reinforce barriers to education and employment. These factors were acknowledged to be important to mine action: however, historically, they were often dismissed as being intractable and, in any event, outside the sphere of influence of the sector.

Fortunately, this perspective did not last. Fast forward 20 years and gender is very much on the mine action sector agenda. Explosive ordnance risk education was the first pillar of mine action to reflect gender differences and it is now a common practice to deploy mixed gender teams and reflect the local context across all facets of operations, from a Non-Technical Survey (NTS) to explosive ordnance disposal (EOD). In addition, the disaggregation of both beneficiary and casualty data by sex and age is now largely standardized. This enables mine action organizations to directly involve women, girls, boys and men from diverse backgrounds, and ensure that their perspectives and concerns make their way into priorities and action.

Finally, the employment of women in clearance and explosive ordnance disposal has evolved significantly. Women have been deployed as deminers in more than 25 countries and territories. Recent research studies in Sri Lanka, Afghanistan and Lebanon prove that employing women in these roles transforms gender norms positively by challenging perceptions of women’s ability to perform the same jobs as men, increasing women’s influence in decision-making and, by providing them with financial independence, helping them pursue further education for themselves and their relatives.

This transformation did not come about in a vacuum; it happened within a global movement on gender equality and human rights. Despite some initial scepticism, the mine action sector has become a productive partner in advocating for gender equality and women’s empowerment. The integration of gender considerations in the international framework for mine action, for example, the Oslo Action Plan of the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention, ensures that gender remain a cross-cutting theme. Consequently, national mine action authorities, donors and operators place greater importance on the promotion of gender equality and women’s empowerment.

Gender inequality affects us all, but is particularly unfair to women and girls. Being a girl or a woman most often means being valued less, facing stronger barriers to rights and opportunities, experiencing more violence, and having less of a voice. An understanding of context-specific gender roles is therefore essential for mine action projects to reach their goals effectively and with the broadest impact.

However, even though the mine action sector has demonstrated that it can make a positive impact on the complex dynamics in the enabling environment, more work needs to be carried out. This is particularly true in terms of supporting women in middle and senior management roles, and prioritizing meaningful representation of women in training and at international conferences. Finally, more efforts are required to enhance understanding of how aspects of a person’s identities, such as their age, disability status, ethnicity, gender, religion and race, combine to create different modes of discrimination and privilege.
National Mine Action Authority and Mine Action Centre policies, arrangements, procedures, frameworks, etc.

- Governing apparatus for the national mine action authority or the mine action centre
- National Mine Action Strategy
- Standing Operating Procedures
- National Mine Action Standards
- Community engagement strategy
- Convening apparatus – procedures for meetings and information sharing
- Information management workflow, from data entry of information to maintenance of database
- Work plans for the mine action centre
- Technical working groups
- Sector working groups
- Process for reviewing national strategy at the level of the national mine action authority
- Human resource management

And also...

- Injury surveillance systems managed by the health sector
- Ministry of Education and schools
- Ministries of Social Welfare
- Justice and Security Institutions
- Ministries responsible for technology, communications, innovations, etc.
Sri Lanka and Syria provide two examples of a mine action response in developing and deploying capacities outside of a ‘classic’ Mine Action Centre structure.

In 2013, UNICEF and US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention facilitated a global training on national injury surveillance systems, predominantly for countries affected by explosive ordnance, during which each country developed a multi-stakeholder Injury Surveillance Systems Action Plan. This included Sri Lanka, which was represented by the Ministry of Health, the Department of Police, and the UNICEF Country Office. A national working group was formed on injury surveillance, and the Non-Communicable Disease Unit of the Ministry of Health developed a pilot injury surveillance system in one government hospital. This partnership eventually expanded to include the Family Health Bureau, the Sri Lanka Medical Association, and the Department of Police. By the end of 2017, the Automated Injury Surveillance System was active in 90 hospitals where it recorded and analysed over 47,900 incidents and helped identify insights into the causes and prevalence of injuries, including for those killed or injured by explosive ordnance. From a mine action perspective, the analysis of patterns of accidents involving explosive ordnance helped the national mine action authority and its partners to identify the risk factors (e.g. most at-risk areas, groups and behaviours) and the protective factors (e.g. safe behaviours and safe areas) in order to inform the prioritization of mine action activities. As of 2018, UNICEF’s support was no longer required; the system functioned embedded into the Ministry of Health reporting mechanism. In 2020, the national injury surveillance system expanded to 167 hospitals. Civilian casualties from explosive ordnance – or, the current lack thereof – can be monitored and corroborated through the data from the national injury surveillance system.

In Syria, where no national authority is specifically dedicated to mine action, UNICEF invested in capacity development of line ministries and other national stakeholders for a cost-effective, sustainable and pragmatic response. Explosive Ordnance Risk Education (EORE) was successfully integrated into the official national school curriculum for almost all grades through a partnership with the Ministry of Education initiated in 2012. A whole generation of young Syrians have received – or will receive – EORE during their schooling. To reach a wider range of vulnerable children, UNICEF engaged with the Ministry of Health to integrate EORE into national immunization programmes. For example, the polio campaign has access to besieged and other hard-to-reach areas that other counterparts do not have. The Ministry of Health (Primary Health Care) developed EORE materials for health workers to use in targeted areas during the implementation of the immunization campaigns. EORE was integrated in four immunization campaigns run by the Ministry of Health and reached 541,027 people in 2020. To maximize coverage, UNICEF also supports other ministries, such as the Ministry of Religious Affairs and the Ministry of Information. In 2019–2020, 2,552 religious leaders were trained to promote safety messages in mosques, schools and premises affiliated with the Ministry of Religious Affairs. In 2020, EORE messages were incorporated on the Syrian educational channel and platform, which at broadcast lessons for all students during the COVID–19 lockdown. For the first-time, risk education sessions were provided to technical vocational schools for students aged 15–17. In total, UNICEF supported the capacity of 1,870 governmental and non-governmental partners from all Syrian 14 governorates on how to avoid the risk of explosive ordnance.
DEVELOPING INDIVIDUAL CAPACITIES – THE ‘70-20-10 Rule’

Research has shown that 70 per cent of learning comes from on-the-job experience and 20 percent from social interactions and relationships within organizations; only 10 percent can be attributed to formal training. This 10 percent of formal training, however, is the backbone of successful learning. Learning to drive a car is a classic example, where one begins with formal training yet truly learns through practical experience and time.

The research showed that the importance of formal training is not confined to learning new skills. It also can act as an amplifier at various points, boosting what we’ve learned through experience and social interaction.

This research, which was conducted in the 1980s, has come to be known as the ‘70-20-10 rule’ and is considered valid to this day.

All rules have exceptions, and so does this one. The ‘rule’ assumes that people are hired for jobs for which they already have at least some exposure to the required, specific technical skills. It therefore would not be universally applicable to mine action, especially when it is a new sector in the country, and personnel require training in skills they had not previously attained.

In practical terms, the validity of this ratio in the mine action sector will evolve over time. In the private sector where the research was conducted, one assumes that personnel are hired already well-versed in the technical aspects of their job. This often is not the case in mine action, especially in newer programmes. In addition, there will always be a requirement for formally training new staff due to turnover, which tends to be high in the immediate post-conflict period, or to fill new roles as programmes evolve. However, as programmes mature and technical skills are developed, it is worth reviewing the capacity development strategy with an eye to maintaining a healthy balance between the three learning strategies. The goal should be a progressive evolution towards 70-20-10.

In practice, this means actively creating the opportunities for staff to challenge themselves through experience, and for productive interactions within the team and between teams – for example, between mine action centre and implementing partner staff.
In 1997, the United Nations Mine Action Service (UNMAS) convened the first Annual Meeting of Mine Action Directors and UN Advisers (NDM-UN). For many national directors, it was the first time they met their peers from other countries. What began as a meeting of 40 people has grown to an annual event that includes almost 600 participants from affected states, United Nations agencies, donor countries, humanitarian mine action non-governmental organizations, academia, think tanks, researchers and commercial companies.

The primary purpose of the NDM-UN has not changed: to afford national directors and international mine action professionals the opportunity to learn from each other. By the very nature of their role, national staff simply do not have the same exposure to multiple countries and experiences as their international colleagues, nor the same opportunities to be on the international stage. On behalf of the United Nations Inter-Agency Coordination Group on Mine Action (IACG-MA), UNMAS organizes the NDM-UN to ensure that they do. At the meeting, the national directors and other mine action staff of affected countries engage at the international level, communicate their needs and perspectives, and demonstrate their accomplishments to a comprehensive and extensive audience. Participating as a speaker in one of the panels and organizing a side event provide the opportunity to practise and strengthen the capability to promote and explain national mine action programmes, skills that can be leveraged for fund-raising purposes and advocacy efforts. The NDM-UN offers the opportunity to establish and strengthen bilateral relationships, and formal and informal networks, including through regional group meetings often organized by the Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining (GICHD).

The International Mine Action Standards (IMAS) Review Board and the Steering Group present two other important mechanisms coordinated by UNMAS for national capacity development through global peer-to-peer engagement. Participation by national directors and staff provides them insight into the management of an international governance process, the relationships between various international stakeholders, and the means through which differences of opinion can be resolved multilaterally. Although the emphasis here is on national staff, it should be recognized that the NDM-UN and IMAS governance structures both provide benefits in terms of developing the capacity of international staff through engagement with national staff colleagues from diverse countries.
MINE ACTION FUNCTIONAL CAPACITIES: WHAT ARE WE DEVELOPING CAPACITIES FOR?

Consider a task that is both universal and critical for all mine action programmes; i.e. producing quality donor reports. If capacity for donor reporting is deemed limited at the National Mine Action Centre, how best to develop it further? Providing training on report writing and mentoring counterparts on different donor requirements? Perhaps the staff have opportunities to work with colleagues in the UNDP country office responsible for resource mobilization. All of these are viable interventions.

The other path would be to view this in terms of strengthening the broad functional capacities that are involved, rather than focusing immediately on the specific skills required for this one task. Ask the question – Does the organization have the capacity to engage with donors in a meaningful way? If not, where are the limitations? Does the organization have policies and strategies that will produce the necessary inputs for a quality report? How strong is the organization’s capacity to assess its work and get feedback from others? Where, within all three dimensions, are there weaknesses that can be addressed, and what are the obstacles that need to be mitigated and/or worked around?

A long-term, sustainable capacity development response to resource mobilization will apply all four drivers of change. It will look to develop leadership skills so that national authorities successfully interact with donors, institutional arrangements that produce and distribute accurate information, knowledgeable staff to provide inputs for analysis, and accountability mechanisms to ensure credibility for the mine action programme.

June 2021, CMAA and UNDP Cambodia undertake a field monitoring visit to Land Reclamation Non-Technical Survey (LRNTS) sites to monitor the process and share technical knowledge and expertise with operators.
In 2017, the Government of Lebanon established a Mine Action Forum with support from United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). The Forum quickly realized many practical results, including a 40 percent increase in resources for the Mine Action Programme, yet its achievements in terms of long-term strengthening of capacities are equally important.

The Mine Action Forum is structured as a continuous series of meetings linked to each other through specific action points that are progressively addressed, amended, and adapted to meet the interest and concerns of all stakeholders. It is led by a champion donor (currently, the Royal Norwegian Embassy) who convenes all partners to the meetings with no media allowed, regardless of the level of high officials and ambassadors present. The agenda is based on action points from the previous meeting, with inputs from stakeholders, and remains flexible in order to address the most urgent ongoing challenges at any given time. Participants convene in a U-shaped format enabling a face-to-face interaction where every stakeholder has equal say, with the facilitation of a neutral expert. In Lebanon, Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining (GICHD) facilitated the first meetings followed by an international consultant.

The Forum has strengthened functional capacities within the Lebanon Mine Action Centre and achieved results particularly within the enabling environment and in the organizational dimension.

**Enabling environment results and capacities**

- The regular meeting of all the relevant actors – an achievement in itself
- A platform created for honest and constructive discussion for a wide range of mine action actors, where everyone from smaller national operators to large donors sit and work together
- Engaged and informed donors
- A strong team spirit created – a collective responsibility for improving the sector
- Strengthened capacity of the Lebanon Mine Action Centre to engage stakeholders and define a vision.

**Organizational dimension results and capacities**

- Improved efficiency of the Lebanon Mine Action Centre and of implementing partners
- Revision of the Lebanon National Mine Action Standards and drafted and developed a new strategy through a consultative and inclusive process
- Technical Survey on Cluster Munition Clearance introduced, and dramatically increased reliance on non-technical survey
- Improved donor engagement and coordination to prevent duplication, resulting in a broader geographic distribution of mine action resources and assets
- Strengthened capacity of the Lebanon Mine Action Centre to budget and manage, and, through the ongoing feedback and an open agenda structure, the capacity strengthened to evaluate.

The Mine Action Forum in Lebanon has proven to be a successful initiative. The close and honest discussion of challenges (an essential condition) has enabled the stakeholders to address their concerns and develop collective solutions. The strong coordination among donors in the presence of the Lebanon Mine Action Centre and international partners has led to a more equitable approach to all geographic areas. The operators have increased their efficiency, new methods and tools has been tested and approved, donor funding to Lebanon is increasing, and cooperation between the actors has increased. And the strengthening of functional capacities in the enabling environment and organizational dimension helps to ensure that these gains and achievements are sustainable in the long term, irrespective of the individual who is chairing the meeting.
Organizing a capacity development response by task can lead to a focus only on the individuals that perform them, with insufficient attention paid to other factors that impact their ability to develop their own capacities further and/or to put to good use the capacities they already possess. By contrast, a functional approach improves results over multiple rather than individual tasks and gives managers a broader perspective on capacity bottlenecks and gaps.

The following tables illustrate how functional capacities are the foundation of a mine action programme’s ability to achieve results. The answers to these questions will help national managers and their international (or national) advisers develop a long-term and effective plan to develop capacities in all three dimensions.

The impacts of the enabling environment and organizational dimension become more visible through this method of analysis, leading to more comprehensible and sustainable responses. Often it is just as important to know what you cannot fix as what you can.

Where functional capacities are determined to be weaker than desired, the first question is: where are the bottlenecks? Check in all three dimensions. Is this something that can be improved through training of individuals? Are the individuals well trained but constrained by office processes that require updating? Or are there significant obstacles in the enabling environment that will require long-term effort, or constraints that are beyond the control of the programme?

September 2020, a joint donor field visit and monitoring visit took place with a delegation from Australia (DFAT), KOICA, the Republic of Korea, CMAA, and UNDP. The team visited clearance sites and affected communities in Pailin, Battambang, and Banteay Meanchey provinces.
CAPACITY TO ENGAGE STAKEHOLDERS

• Does the national mine action authority have the capacity to elicit cooperation from line ministries?
• Does the government have the capacity to engage in meaningful discussion with its mine action donors?
• Do the national mine action entities have the capacity to resolve disputes among stakeholders?
• Does the mine action centre have the capacity to respond to the concerns of mine action operators?
• Do the national mine action entities have the capacity to hear feedback from diverse communities?
• Do mine action organizations have the capacity to reach all affected populations?

CAPACITY TO ASSESS A SITUATION AND DEFINE A VISION

• Does the national mine action authority have the capacity for meaningful oversight of the mine action programme?
• Does the national mine action authority have the capacity to analyse the information submitted to it and to make informed decisions?
• Does the mine action centre have the capacities required to support the national mine action authorities in making strategic decisions?
• Does the mine action centre have the capacities required to identify gaps?
• Do the national mine action authority and mine action centre have the capacity to make good use of their engagement with stakeholders?

CAPACITY TO FORMULATE POLICIES AND STRATEGIES

• Does the national mine action authority have the capacity to support the strategic mobilization of resources?
• Does the national mine action authority have the capacity to ensure that policies support mine action operators in terms of import and transport of equipment and personnel?
• Does the national mine action programme have the capacity to mainstream gender and diversity in policies, strategies and operations?
• Does the mine action centre have the capacities to develop:
  - national standards?
  - information management systems?
  - quality assurance systems?
  - a prioritization system?

CAPACITY TO BUDGET, MANAGE AND IMPLEMENT

• Does the mine action centre have appropriate capacities for financial management?
• Does the mine action centre have appropriate capacities for donor engagement?
• Does the mine action centre have the capacities to implement all steps of the programme’s information management policy and strategy?
• Does the mine action centre have the capacity to implement a quality assurance mechanism that is accountable and that has a respectful engagement with stakeholders?

CAPACITY TO EVALUATE

• Does the mine action centre have the capacity to conduct self-assessments?
• Does the mine action centre have the capacity to conduct multi-stakeholder assessments?
• Does the mine action centre have the capacity to forecast future resource availability, and plan accordingly?
Capacity Self-Assessments
Capacity self-assessments are the fundamental basis for the successful development of national capacities over time. They provide baseline starting points and support prioritization and planning of response. Capacity assessments help to target financial and human resources, and encourage resource mobilization. They can be a powerful tool for engagement with various stakeholder groups and for accountability.

However, capacity assessments can truly be a chore. Few people genuinely relish the experience of critically examining their own performance, or that of the institution they are part of, hunting for areas that require improvement. To be sure, no one enjoys doing so repeatedly.

Still, capacity assessments can be rewarding provided that they are nationally led, realistic, and conducted in a respectful spirit of partnership. It is essential to ensure a high probability of follow-up because it is demotivating to compile a list of institutional and staff weaknesses knowing that nothing will be done about it.

All of this requires careful planning in advance. In fact, the time required to engage stakeholders and prepare for a country’s capacity self-assessment can be longer than the execution of the self-assessment itself, particularly if it is the first time or after a major shift in context. It is imperative to allow national authorities adequate time to design the assessments carefully, to become comfortable with the process and to ensure that there is no duplication, as well as to provide them adequate time to involve and get the support of relevant stakeholders.

This chapter focuses on stakeholder engagement, and the design and implementation of a capacity self-assessment. Chapter Four will focus on the programme response and monitoring of results within a results framework – actions, evaluation and adjustment. The full cycle is illustrated in Figure 1.

The process may appear demanding, and it is true that a first-time capacity assessment can indeed be a complex undertaking. However, rest assured that subsequent exercises do not require the same level of time and effort; partners should be reassured about this as they embark on this journey. Monitoring can range from brief check-ins on a quarterly basis focused on implementing the plan’s activities, and an annual review of progress indicators that is integrated into other annual evaluation exercises and not a standalone activity. (Remember: capacity development is not an outcome in and of itself – it is a means to improve programme results.) Based on what this monitoring reveals, the capacity development plan can be adjusted, and the scope of a new assessment can be determined. Unless there has been a major change in the programme, each step described in

‘Relevant stakeholders’ are not limited to those that will directly participate in the actual assessment. Donors, for example, should be kept informed throughout the process to avoid duplication (e.g. funding multiple organizations to perform capacity assessments) and to solicit their input on the scope and process. Not only is their perspective valuable, but inevitably, the program will turn to these same donors for funds to help strengthen the capacity gaps that are identified.

Viet Nam has accelerated the progress of overcoming the legacy of war. By the end of 2021, and as part of the four-year Korea-Viet Nam Mine Action project, approximately 17,000ha of land was surveyed, of which nearly 10,000 was confirmed as contaminated with explosive ordnance and cleared.
Capacity Development Assessment and Programme Response

**Define**
**Scope and Process**
- Map capacities
- Identify participants
- Establish scope
- Set transparency parameters
- Agree on monitoring plan

**Plan, Review and Adjust**
- Analyse results
- Identify short- and long-term actions and goals
- Determine indicators

**Design**
**Self-Assessment Tools**
- Match tasks with functional capacities
- Draft the assessment questionnaire
- Establish scoring protocol
- Determine goals and standards

**Execute**
**Self-Assessment Implementation**
- Present consensus design
- Score capacities
- Match and map functions
- Brainstorm response
- Prioritize

**Implement Capacity Development Plan**

**Monitor Results**
this chapter will be quicker and lighter than for the initial assessment.

**STEP 1: DEFINE THE SCOPE AND PROCESS**

There are five key areas that require agreement before embarking further on the process: (i) mapping capacities; (ii) participant organizations and personnel; (iii) scope of the assessment; (iv) transparency, or how the results of the information will be shared; and (v) monitoring and follow-up.

1. **Map capacities**

Before beginning the assessment, it is helpful to compile a list of all the resources available to the mine action response, including those outside of the immediate mine action programme. This does not need to be a heavy, formal process. Brainstorm – at a minimum alone, although preferably with others – on the available resources that would be available for the follow-on activities that are likely to be identified during the assessment. (This is not confined to financial resources.) There is value in taking stock of these potential assets on a regular basis; programmes evolve and personnel change. What training is the UNDP office planning? Would the new chief of finance be open to on-the-job training for your project staff? If Non-Technical Survey (NTS) teams cannot gain access to certain areas, are there health care teams working in those areas that can be tasked with asking about injuries from detonations or suspected hazardous areas? Is there a keen grants officer at an embassy who might be willing to mentor staff in writing proposals, presentations and reports?

Map the enabling environment carefully. Even though some ‘disabling’ aspects of this dimension can be difficult to discuss (and may be well outside of the control of the mine action programme), they can often be mitigated by increasing capacity at the organizational and individual levels. For example, perceptions of corruption throughout a country can be countered by increasing capacity at the institutional level in terms of transparent processes and clear SoPs and, at the individual level, through training on accountability and reporting mechanisms.

2. **Identify participants**

Logically enough, global good practice prescribes that a self-assessment of national capacities be conducted by the national staff – perhaps with the guidance of a trusted facilitator. Ideally, staff at all levels of the programme would have the opportunity to express their perceptions of their own capacities and those of others, and have a voice in determining the capacity development response. It would be nationally led, nationally owned, and inclusive.

In reality, however, for a variety of reasons this ‘gold standard’ of inclusion and national ownership simply may not be pragmatic or may likely produce a constructive product in every country.

At a practical level, there simply may be too many people. In very large programmes, one could consider a tiered process. Staff at various levels and locations can conduct capacity self-assessments based on a common questionnaire, the results of which can be integrated and conveyed to the next level of management, giving valuable information to senior management when it conducts its own self-assessment. (In fact, the information gleaned from this process may reveal a very different perspective on capacities and priorities than those held by the NMAA and MAC staff.) The benefit of undertaking such a complex process can only be determined by considering the likelihood of follow-up to the results of the assessment.

In some countries, staff at all levels will be comfortable expressing opinions and highlighting problems to management and colleagues; in others, it may be a completely unrealistic to expect that management and operational weakness will be discussed openly. There are ways around this, such as working in smaller groups, using closed ballots.
and keeping questions positive (e.g. “Which three actions would be your top choices to improve adherence to SoPs in information management?” with a list of suggested actions.) But it can also wait until next year. If senior management conducts annual self-assessments that genuinely identify limitations and that are transparent with the results, staff will become more comfortable with this type of activity, which will eventually increase.

Unlike other sectors, for mine action, another common, practical obstacle to an inclusive process emerges when the major stakeholder groups are parties to conflict and their representatives cannot meet. Here, UNDP can sometimes play the role of intermediary. Ideally, mine action will be part of ceasefire and peace discussions. Even when parties are not yet prepared to share information on technical matters pertaining to devices and locations, they are often willing to discuss their own capacities and to offer an assessment of the other side. An invitation to assess what the other side could do better has proven to be an attractive opening for discussion in the past.

The decision as to whether implementing partners should participate will also vary across countries. If a self-assessment involves the national director, his or her deputy, an international Chief Technical Adviser and the programme managers of five international NGOs, can it be considered truly nationally owned and inclusive? The answer is no. Can it be a valuable exercise nevertheless? The answer is, yes, provided that it is recognized as an incremental step towards an agreed goal for an eventual nationally owned and managed capacity assessment.

3. Establish scope

Should the assessment cover solely the results matrix of the national authorities in terms of coordination, management, quality assurance and other such functions? Or will it also cover the capacity of implementing partners? This will depend on the structure and level of maturity of the programme, and should be clearly defined and agreed ahead of time.

4. Set transparency parameters

Agree on transparency and on which parts of the assessment process will be made public. In some cases, it may be preferable to have some parts kept confidential to encourage an open discussion. For example, participants can agree that discussions are confidential but that a summary of results and a report will be made public. Finding the right balance between transparency and a ‘safe space’ for debate requires advance discussion and agreement on ground rules.
5. Agree on the monitoring and review schedule

There are two parts to this: monitoring an action plan that is developed as a result of the assessment; and monitoring the actual strengthening of capacities over time. The former can be short-term to ensure that the plan stays on track and so that, if activities are delayed, the delays and reasons are documented. Second is monitoring the actual strengthening of capacities where short-term monitoring of results has far less value. (Monitoring results is addressed in more detail in Chapter Four.)

STEP 2: DESIGN THE SELF-ASSESSMENT TOOLS

1. Match tasks with functional capacities

The starting points for any assessment will be the national strategic plan and, at a more detailed level, the respective work plans of the contributing organizations. Typically, this would be the national mine action authority and/or the mine action centre, depending on the scope of the assessment agreed upon during Step One.

How strong are the capacities for each task? Are they adequate? You cannot answer this question without defining not only the required skills, but also the required capacities.

2. Draft the assessment questionnaire

*Use the country’s own workplan or strategic plan as a template to organize the questions* – this is not the time to re-write goals and objectives. One country may organize its workplan by mine action pillar. Another country may do so by organizational unit. For each task, ask the question, “Which functional capacities are the most relevant to accomplish this task?”

3. Establish the scoring protocol

During the assessment, the capacities to achieve results will be analysed, debated, and given a score. Some models rely on colour-coded systems (e.g. red, yellow and green), and others utilize numerical scores. It does not matter. What does matter is that the levels are well understood and agreed on with the national authorities prior to the assessment. Preferably, the scores are defined in terms of their impact on the programme and not in abstract terms. In other words, “low, medium, and high” do not convey impact on results in the same way as “effective” and “efficient”. However, again, use what translates best to the local context and is likely to elicit the most acceptance and open response. It might be easier to be rated a “3” than to be judged “mildly effective.”

A scale of ten is considered the most useful because it provides for a range of judgment (and compromise if there is disagreement among participants) and provides some leeway to register the incremental improvements in capacity over time.

4. Determine goals and standards

Not everyone can win a gold medal, nor should mine action centres aspire to conduct all tasks at gold medal standard. With the exception of safety, where only the highest level of effectiveness should be acceptable, bronze and silver medals should be equally celebrated. Over time, perhaps, all tasks will be performed to an equally high standard, but it is an important part of the assessment process to prioritize which capacities to strengthen as a result of the current assessment and which ones to leave as they are. Discussing this should be part of the design process.
In 2018, UNDP and the Viet Nam National Mine Action Centre (VNMAC) launched a new partnership together with the Korea International Cooperation Agency. The three partners agreed that VNMAC would lead a capacity self-assessment, facilitated by UNDP, to ascertain the capacities of the organization, identify gaps that hindered fulfillment of the Centre’s mandate, and to provide a baseline against which to design, prioritize and measure the impact of interventions supported by the project. This was also an opportunity for VNMAC to present a broader framework for capacity support to its development partners.

In 2014, a similar exercise was carried out in Lao PDR where UNDP’s multi-sectoral Capacity Development Framework had been applied for the first time to a mine action programme. The resulting Capacity Development Action Plans for both the National Regulatory Authority and UXO Lao, the national operator, detailed concrete actions to strengthen their respective roles that could also be presented to donors and partners for further support.

Although the UNDP Capacity Development Framework guided both countries, the exercises were not identical. However their differences are the result of a common feature: the national authorities had a leadership role and deep engagement in the design of the exercise and ownership of the final product. Therefore, the details of how the capacity assessment was conducted and subsequently utilized reflect the management characteristics, structure and priorities of the national programme, with all of its strengths and limitations.

The UNDP methodology involved four steps: 1) scoping and mapping; 2) design of the assessment; 3) a facilitated self-assessment exercise; and 4) formulation of the capacity development strategy and action/monitoring plan.

Several months were allocated for Steps 1 and 2 to gain trust and to agree on the expected outcome of the exercise. Although the relationship with UNDP had only been in place for around a year, VNMAC boldly agreed to openly debate its own limitations obstacles to the fulfilment of its mandate and potential.

Most of the VNMAC staff, covering various technical and operational functions, provided their perspectives through a combination of workshops, small meetings, and individual feedback through questionnaires. The result was comprehensive feedback on current capacity versus desired capacity goals, and capacity development programmatic responses ranked according to priority.

The methodology is aimed at making the capacity support sustainable and ensuring ownership over the capacity development action plan, which translates the strategic aspirations into clear actions with specific focal point(s) and timelines. This is further reinforced through regular reviews and adjustments of the action plan. It is a VNMAC plan – not a UNDP plan. It logically follows from this that the capacity development action plan goes beyond what UNDP might be able to provide, and that the intended results will only be achieved when all partners contribute to the shared goals outlined in the plan.
**STEP 3: CARRY OUT THE SELF-ASSESSMENT**

The most difficult work is over. If you have reached a consensus with the national authority on the scope, parameters and design of the self-assessment, the implementation will be relatively simple by comparison. Whether it is a meeting of six people, or a series of workshops involving 100 staff members, the execution of a capacity self-assessment follows a common blueprint.

1. **Present the consensus design**

   Review with participants the scope, transparency parameters, and scoring protocols that have been established during the preparation process. (At this point, these issues preferably should not be subject to further adjustment.) Introduce the Capacity Development Framework, and the matching of tasks and functional capacities that was prepared during Step 2. Engage participants in a discussion of goals, standards and priorities to reach a consensus – or at least an acceptance – that there is no dishonour in low scores (particularly in newer programmes), and that all tasks need not be performed to a gold standard.

2. **Score/assess capacities**

   Questionnaires can be filled out individually, as an entire group, or by participants divided into smaller groups. The responses can be provided in writing, anonymously or acknowledged. The assessment can be conducted in an open session, either in writing or through discussion, or a combination of both. All of this will have been established as part of the scoring protocols in Step 2 and will be specific to each country and context.

3. **Map and match functional capacities**

   As previously discussed, the same functional capacities support the successful execution of multiple tasks. For example, the capacity to engage stakeholders through well-functioning monthly NMAA meetings, with SoPs for follow-up, and the creation (and dissolution) of sub-groups for identified tasks, etc. underpins results of tasks related to resource mobilization, prioritization of clearance tasks, and advocacy.

   Look for multiplier effects, where strengthening functional capacities in one area will have a positive impact on several results at once.

4) **Brainstorm the response; the four drivers of change**

   Through the scoring process, the group has identified capacity weaknesses that constrain the effectiveness of the programme; now what? Experience across sectors has shown that strengthening capacities in four core areas can be relied upon to produce results. The four drivers of change provide a solid framework for creating an action plan for programme response.

   For each area identified in the self-assessment, ask the following questions:

   What would be the impact of strengthening **leadership**? Where are there gaps? This does not necessarily mean one individual, but the leadership that the organization provides in the sector.

   In immediate post-conflict environments in particular, a new sector such as mine action and, indeed, national authorities in general can be crowded out by the sheer volume of international organizations, personnel, and their meetings. The capacity to lead may be enhanced more by having the national director attend other meetings, or having mine action as a standing agenda item, rather than focusing on the Mine Action Centre or NMAA meeting.

**Purposefully set aside adequate time for a discussion of capacity strengths and assets, rather than let it be dominated by a focus on capacity deficits.**
What would be the impact of strengthening institutional arrangements? Are SoPs clear, up-to-date and appropriate to the context (and not simply transferred from another country), and do the staff know the SoPs well? Do teams interact with each other productively within the organization? With external partners?

What would be the impact of strengthening individual knowledge and skills? Is there a deficit in knowledge and technical skills that can be addressed through training, mentoring, more challenging assignments? Or is it simply a question of time and of staff needing to develop more on-the-job experience? (Remember the 70-20-10 rule.)

What would be the impact of strengthening accountability? Where are the opportunities for feedback from all relevant stakeholders? What mechanisms are in place for accountability? Are they incremental, and likely to catch problems early?

5) Prioritize capacities

Although the development of a detailed response plan will take more time, it is good practice to reach a consensus as a group on some priorities. Safety issues will be the first priority in any programme. Other factors to be considered will be resource availability, short- versus long-term actions and consideration of the multiplier effect discussed above.

September 2020, a joint donor field visit and monitoring visit took place with a delegation from Australia (DFAT), KOICA, the Republic of Korea, CMAA, and UNDP. The team visited clearance sites and affected communities in Pailin, Battambang, and Banteay Meanchey provinces.
Capacity Development
Programme Response
and Measurement
This chapter looks at measuring progress in capacity development based on the four drivers of change – institutional arrangements, leadership, knowledge and accountability – within a results framework. (A Mine Action Centre will be used as the illustrative institution, although a National Mine Action Authority would be equally valid.) The goal is to provide a common framework for responding to the priorities identified during a capacity assessment, and a common understanding of how to measure changes in capacity.

For those who thrive on consistency, there is no one blueprint for a capacity development results chain that will fit all contexts and circumstances. The following are consistent across all countries: changes in capacity matter when they are evident in terms of change in the performance, stability and adaptability of the institutions that are being supported.

UNDP considers these three measures as equal components in the long-term strength of national capacities in the institutions it supports and defines them as follows:

Performance: Measured by a combination of the effectiveness and the efficiency with which an institution fulfils its intended purpose. Effectiveness is the degree to which the institution’s objectives are achieved. Efficiency is a comparison of what is produced (or what has been achieved) and resources used (money, time, labour, etc.).

Institutional stability: Measured by the degree to which an institution can decrease volatility of performance through the institutionalization of good practices and norms and identify and mitigate internal and external risks through risk management.

Adaptability: Measured by investments in innovation and continuous improvement to be able to anticipate, adapt and respond to an ever-changing environment.

RESULTS FRAMEWORK FOR CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT RESPONSE

Figure 2 illustrates a generic results framework for a Mine Action Centre. The upper portion of the figure depicts the desired impact and outcome of the programme that will have been determined through a strategic planning or visioning process.18

The lower portion illustrates where capacity development interventions are implemented (outputs) and their intended results (outcomes.)

Note that the outputs and inputs are not intended to be an exhaustive list; they are indicative and illustrative only. With minor tailoring, the same framework applies equally to a National Mine Action Authority.

FROM CAPACITY ASSESSMENT TO CAPACITY ACTION PLAN

Through its capacity assessment the programme will already have:

- identified capacity strengths and weaknesses in all three dimensions and the functional capacity(ies) that will best support and potentially have multiplier effects;
- determined which of the four drivers of change will have the most positive and widespread impact on strengthening capacities;
- selected priorities for action, beginning with any safety issues;
- identified available resources and resource gaps.

The specific programmatic action to address the core issues will be unique to each programme. The following lists are not meant to be comprehensive but have proven successful across countries and contexts.

At the input level, “a good capacity development response builds on existing capacity assets to address the gaps identified in a capacity assessment. Most stakeholders prefer to play to their strengths – their capacity assets – and use what they are doing right to do other things better.”19
Figure 2.
Indicative Results Framework for a Mine Action Centre or National Mine Action Authority

Impact:
Change in people’s well-being
People live free of the threat of mines and other explosive ordnance

Outcome:
Change in institutional performance, stability and adaptability
NATIONAL MINE ACTION CENTRE
Performance, stability and adaptability

Core Capacity Development Programme Responses

INSTITUTIONAL ARRANGEMENTS
- Clear legal role for the mine action centre
- Clear definitions of roles and responsibilities
- Internal coordination mechanism
- Financial management
- .....etc......

LEADERSHIP
- National Mine Action Strategy
- Management tools
- Outreach and coordination mechanisms
- Technical working groups (mine action, recovery, etc.)
- .....etc......

KNOWLEDGE
- Training
- Secondments
- Exchange Programmes
- Technical working groups
- Mentoring
- .....etc......

ACCOUNTABILITY
- Participatory planning mechanism
- Stakeholder feedback mechanism
- Evaluations
- Community liaison and post-clearance surveys
- .....etc......

Input
Human, financial and physical resources, including available competencies/capacities from within the immediate mine action sector and beyond

Output:
Product or service produced that is designed to strengthen capacity and improve performance

Impact:
Change in people’s well-being
People live free of the threat of mines and other explosive ordnance

Outcome:
Change in institutional performance, stability and adaptability
NATIONAL MINE ACTION CENTRE
Performance, stability and adaptability
Institutional issues can be addressed through a combination of reform and incentive mechanisms including by:

- clarifying mandates and terms of reference;
- establishing incentive mechanisms;
- improving horizontal and vertical coordination mechanisms within the institution;
- improving horizontal and vertical coordination mechanisms between the institution and its partners/stakeholders;
- organizational restructuring.

Leadership can be made more effective through programmatic measures that focus on:

- improving communications;
- conducting joint exercises with partners;
- building coalitions;
- management skills.
- conducting a risk analysis and scenario/contingency planning.

Programmatic responses to increase knowledge include:

- Formal training
- Collaborative learning exchange, such as through Technical Working Groups
- Exchange programmes
- Mentoring and coaching
- Knowledge management
- Job experience.

Accountability issues can effectively be addressed through a combination of the following responses:

- A transparent monitoring and evaluation system
- Participatory processes in setting priorities
- Establishment of feedback mechanisms that permit partner input (ranging from affected communities, implementing partners, donors, etc.)
- Peer review mechanisms.

The following tables suggest illustrative (and non-exhaustive) outputs and output indicators for strengthening institutional arrangements, leadership, knowledge, and accountability at a Mine Action Centre, all of which are equally applicable to a National Mine Action Authority.

UNMAS provided a small arms safety training to the Congolese National Police in Masisi, the Democratic Republic of the Congo.
### INSTITUTIONAL ARRANGEMENTS

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<th>ILLUSTRATIVE OUTPUTS</th>
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| **Mine Action Centre roles and responsibilities clarified** | • Number of departments/units with well-defined terms of reference  
• Percentage of staff briefed/trained on the responsibilities of all units. |
| **Mine Action Centre Business processes established** | • Percentage of critical processes with clearly documented requirements for output quality, information flow map, workflow map, and realistic and ambitious performance improvement targets  
• Guidelines on authority and responsibility for new processes  
• Number of staff and managers briefed on new processes  
• Knowledge of staff and manager on new processes  
• Number of briefings to stakeholders about new processes. |

### LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

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<tr>
<th>ILLUSTRATIVE OUTPUTS</th>
<th>ILLUSTRATIVE OUTPUT INDICATORS</th>
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| **Clear strategy defined for the National Mine Action Centre** | • Progress in formulating strategy for the Mine Action Centre’s role within the national mine action strategic plan (as measured by stage)  
• Number of employees/stakeholders who have been briefed on the vision  
• Percent of the employees/stakeholders who understand the vision, who believe the organization has clear goals for the medium term. |
| **Leadership attraction and retention plan implemented** | • Number of people coaching or mentoring other staff  
• Number of staff receiving leadership coaching or mentoring  
• Number of targeted staff participating in/successfully completing a young leader’s course  
• Number of targeted staff remaining in the organization after one year from start of plan, two years, etc. |
### EDUCATION, TRAINING AND LEARNING

#### ILLUSTRATIVE OUTPUTS

#### ILLUSTRATIVE OUTPUT INDICATORS

**Knowledge and learning work plan developed**

- Assessment of learning requirements conducted
- Existence of a shared and costed work plan for formal and informal learning.
- Approval of policies that directly support targeted professional learning opportunities in sectors most in need of improvement.

**Knowledge and learning work plan implemented**

- Funding secured for learning work plan
- Number of planned training sessions conducted
- Number of secondments between the Mine Action Centre and implementing partner staff
- Number of exchange learning opportunities conducted
- Number of staff participating in coaching or mentoring
- Number of work plan targets reached annually
- Number of stakeholder entities involved in the implementation of the learning plan.

### ACCOUNTABILITY MECHANISMS

#### ILLUSTRATIVE OUTPUTS

#### ILLUSTRATIVE OUTPUT INDICATORS

**Integrated monitoring and evaluation framework implemented**

- Funding for evaluations secured
- External evaluations conducted
- Internal evaluations conducted
- Adherence to the monitoring and evaluation mechanism for the United Nations Mine Action Strategy.

**Integrated feedback framework implemented**

- Percentage of data users satisfied with data quality and data management
- Mechanism established for feedback on the Quality Assurance process
- Number of completion surveys that include positive community feedback.
1 For example, linkages between mine action and the 2030 Agenda of Sustainable Development Goals were documented by the GICHD/UNDP Study, 2017.

2 The United Nations Mine Action Strategy 2019–2023: “Strategic Outcome 3: National institutions effectively lead and manage mine action functions and responsibilities. Across all of its support of national capacity strengthening, the UN will promote and advocate for the integration of gender and diversity considerations, including addressing the different needs and priorities of women, girls, boys and men from diverse groups, and promoting greater gender and social inclusion in national mine action efforts.”

3 The United Nations Mine Action Strategy 2019–2023: The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) works with local, national and international partners on linking mine action to development and achievement of the SDGs, and helping mine-affected communities achieve resilience and sustainable development. UNDP’s Mine Action programmes have three major areas of focus: (i) Translating mine action into sustainable development dividends, including human, food or community security and livelihoods; (ii) Strengthening national institutions that accelerate development benefits, including food, human security, jobs and livelihoods; and (iii) Supporting international normative frameworks on mine action.

4 The guidance in this Handbook is based to a great extent on Capacity Development: A UNDP Primer, 2009. There are numerous capacity development frameworks in existence, both practical and academic. In recent years, organizational maturity models have gained prominence in the private sector, and in June 2020, the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research (UNIDIR) published a Counter-IED Capability Maturity Model and Self-Assessment Tool.

5 International Mine Action Standard 3.198. National Mine Action Authority (NMAA) (2009), the government entity, often an inter-ministerial committee, in a mine-affected country is responsible for the regulation, management and coordination of mine action. It should be noted that in the absence of a NMAA, it may be necessary and appropriate for the United Nations, or some other recognized international body, to assume some or all of the responsibilities, and fulfil some or all the functions, of a Mine Action Centre (MAC), or less frequently, an NMAA.

6 International Mine Action Standard 3.178. Mine Action Centre (MAC)/Mine Action Coordination Centre (MACC) (2009), an organization that, on behalf of the NMAA where it exists, is typically responsible for planning, coordination, overseeing, and in some cases, implementation of mine action projects. For national mine action programmes, the MAC/MACC usually acts as the operational office of the NMAA.

7 Although in some instances the national centre will also comprise an operational capacity, the focus of this Handbook remains at the NMAA and MAC levels. As previously noted, the UNDP Capacity Development Framework can, however, be tailored to operational capacity and applied throughout the programme.

8 Even if a United Nations-managed mine action programme is envisaged, inter-agency assessment missions should identify from the outset the full range of national capacities available and factor their development into the programme design.

9 Transitions from UN-managed programmes to national ownership have their own set of complexities: see A Guide to Transitioning Mine Action Programmes to National Ownership, GICHD, Geneva, April 2013.
Sometimes referred to as ‘three levels’ of capacity, or as upstream and downstream capacities. The use of the term ‘dimension’ aims to remove any connotation of hierarchy. Individuals, organizations and the enabling environment exert equal influence on programme results and upon each other.


All of these definitions are taken from UNDP, 2009.

In mine action, there also is a clear set of tasks at the operational level that require specific and well-defined technical expertise that is largely standardized across countries and contexts, and then tailored to the local threat. This includes explosive ordnance disposal, explosive ordnance risk education, victim assistance, clearance, technical surveys, etc.

The term ‘enabling environment’ is something of a misnomer since there are important elements in every country’s enabling environment that can have a distinctly disabling effect on mine action results. Key among these is conflict, and the common post-conflict scenario where people with the least voice are the ones who require most support from the mine action community.


GICHD et al., 2020.

UNDP Lebanon, 2019.

Each country will have its own monitoring and evaluation plan for overall results. In addition, outside organizations including The Mine Action Review monitor and report on impact and results.

Elements of the UNDP Approach to Capacity Development.

Adapted from Capacity Development: A UNDP Primer (2009).

The United Nations Gender Guidelines 2019 contain specific guidance on disaggregation of data and other elements relevant to monitoring and evaluation.
References


