



NATIONAL CAPACITIES AND RESIDUAL CONTAMINATION

ALBANIA



GENEVA INTERNATIONAL CENTRE FOR HUMANITARIAN DEMINING

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Glossary of abbreviations

AAF	Albanian Armed Forces
AMAC	Albanian Mine Action Committee
AMAE	Albanian Mine Action Executive
AMMCO	Albania Mine and Munitions Coordination Office
AP	Anti-Personnel
APMBC	Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention
AVR	Armed Violence Reduction
AXO	Abandoned Ordnance
CHA	Confirmed Hazardous Area
EOD	Explosive Ordnance Disposal
ERW	Explosive Remnants of War
FRY	Federal Republic of Yugoslavia
GFFO	German Federal Foreign Office
GICHD	Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining
IMAS	International Mine Action Standards
IMSMA	Information Management System for Mine Action
ITF	International Trust Fund
MEDEVAC	Medical Evacuation
MoD	Ministry of Defence
Mol	Ministry of the Interior
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organisation
NAMSA	NATO's Maintenance and Supply Agency
NMAS	National Mine Action Standards
NPA	Norwegian People's Aid
OSCE	Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe
PfP	Partnership for Peace
PM/WRA	U.S. Department of State Bureau of Political-Military Affairs, Office of Weapons Removal and Abatement
QA	Quality Assurance
QC	Quality Control
QM	Quality Management
SHA	Suspected Hazardous Area
SOP	Standard Operating Procedure
TAP	Trans Adriatic Pipeline

UEMS	Unplanned Explosion at a Munitions Site
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UXO	Unexploded Ordnance

Executive summary

This case study forms part of a broader GICHD study on national capacities and residual contamination. The purpose of this report is to document Albania's experience of developing national systems and capacities to address residual contamination and to identify and present good practices and lessons learnt.

Albania faces contamination from explosive remnants of war (ERW), primarily as a result of the 1999 Kosovo conflict. The country is also affected by contamination stemming from both World Wars. Additionally, during a period of internal turmoil in 1997, ammunition depots were destroyed and looted leading to the scattering of live ammunition in some areas.

On 29 February 2000, Albania ratified the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention (APMBC), and on 30 November 2009, the Government of Albania fulfilled its obligations under Article 5 of the APMBC, nine months ahead of schedule.

The inter-ministerial Albanian Mine Action Committee (AMAC) and the Albanian Mine Action Executive (AMAE) were established by the Ministry of Defence (MoD) in 1999. AMAE was administered as a Direct Execution project through the UNDP. Despite numerous references to the issue of sustainability, and in the face of a clear lack of enthusiasm from the government, no concrete plan for institutionalising AMAE within the existing government architecture was ever implemented. As such, administratively, AMAE remained a UNDP Direct Execution project-implementation unit throughout its existence. After Article 5 was fulfilled, in 2009, and following some delays, AMAE was renamed the Albania Mine and Munitions Coordination Office (AMMCO) in March 2011. AMMCO is also managed as a UNDP Direct Execution project but operating under an updated mandate as the coordination body responsible for the management and quality assurance (QA) of 'ERW hotspot' clearance operations, including maintenance of the national information management system for mine action (IMSMA) database. As a UNDP-managed project, it remains somewhat unclear whether there is a role for AMMCO to play after hotspot clearance has been completed (and what such a role would be).

Additionally, AMMCO is currently providing capacity-building support to the Explosive Ordnance Disposal (EOD) Company of the Albanian Armed Forces (AAF), including the referral of any EOD spot tasks highlighted by the communities. A State Police Anti-Explosives Unit also deals with EOD callouts, operating under the direction of the Ministry of the Interior (MoI). The MoD recently tried to establish a technical working group to look at EOD standards. This technical initiative could also provide an effective platform for dialogue on other issues, such as roles and responsibilities with regards to the management of residual contamination.

In terms of information management, there are at least three different databases separately recording and storing data related to the ERW. The information stored in these systems is likely to be of high value to whichever actor is eventually mandated to manage residual risk in Albania. However, these datasets are not automatically linked or coordinated¹, meaning that the three organisations working on issues related to Albania's ERW (AMMCO, the AAF and the State Police) do not have an up to date vision of each other's activity. There currently appears to be no plan in place to centralise and manage information on the ERW.

¹ AMMCO reports that information is regularly shared between IMSMA and the AAF database.

This case study highlights the importance of structured long-term strategic planning, including a comprehensive and properly implemented exit strategy. At this point in the cycle of mine action in Albania, when the financial resources provided by the international community are all but exhausted, it is essential that some time, effort and remaining resources be targeted at re-assessing and establishing sustainable foundations and structures for dealing with the ongoing threat posed by residual contamination. UNDP should develop a formal strategy to transition AMMCO to the government, or a plan to close it that includes guidance on how relevant competencies should be absorbed into existing state structures. This should be done as a matter of urgency, accompanied by a detailed implementation plan (including measurable outputs and outcomes) and with the approval of the relevant ministries.

Key findings: good practices, main challenges and lessons learnt

Good practices

- Development of nationally staffed capacities capable of delivering clearance, quality management and information management in line with IMAS
- An understanding of international systems
- Development of publically available hotlines
- Negotiation of considerable in-kind support from Albanian government
- Recognition of the importance of financial transparency

Main challenges and lessons learnt

- Development of a plan for transition that would ensure both effective implementation of programming and long-term sustainability
- Difficulty in achieving consensus among numerous government stakeholders
- Need for timely and structured focus on information management

Introduction

Background to the study

This case study forms part of a broader GICHD study on national capacities and residual contamination; it is based on a combination of desk research, remote interviews and the findings and email follow-up from the GICHD mission to Albania in June 2016. A full list of the meetings held during the mission is available in Annex I.

The purpose of this report is to document Albania's experience of developing national clearance capacities and management systems to address residual contamination and to identify and present good practices and lessons learnt. The terms of reference for the national capacities and residual contamination study are available in Annex II.

Country context

The Republic of Albania is located in the Balkans region, has a population of approximately 2.9 million² and shares borders with Montenegro, Kosovo, Macedonia and Greece. In terms of health, education and income, in 2015 the country was ranked 85th out of 188 countries on the United Nations (UN) Human Development Index³.

Following 50 years of communist rule, and with the help of international aid, Albania transitioned from a centrally-planned to a market-oriented economy. The country moved from being one of Europe's poorest nations in the early 1990s to middle-income status in 2008; poverty declined by half during that time⁴.

Albania faced serious challenges to its political system and security in the transition process from an almost totalitarian communist regime to a multi-party democracy, especially during the mid-1990s. In 1997, Albania was subject to internal civil unrest and turmoil as the population took to the streets in reaction to the collapses of fraudulent pyramid investment schemes. Prior to 1997, progress on decommissioning or destroying excessive ammunition and weapons stocks dating back to the Cold War period had been very slow. This became a serious problem in 1997 as the period of turmoil and anarchy made some weapons and ammunition accessible to civilians, prompting mere civil unrest to become a state of emergency⁵.

In addition, during this time, the police, intelligence service and the military were all considered 'armed forces', which proved to be very problematic. As a result of this internal crisis, the police service disintegrated. Subsequently, reforming the police became a priority for the Albanian Government⁶.

In the period after 1997, Albania implemented significant political and security sector reforms, with major milestones being the adoption of a new constitution in 1998 and the country's accession to NATO in 2009. The 1998 constitution placed the intelligence service and the police under civil authority. The reform of the police and the army, as well as a programme to destroy weapons and stockpiles, have, however, been implemented very slowly⁷.

Origin, nature and scope of the mine/explosive remnants of war contamination problem

Albania's mine and ERW contamination problem is primarily a result of the 1999 Kosovo conflict. The armed forces of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (FRY) laid landmines along both sides of Albania's border with Kosovo, in the north-eastern county of Kukës. Cluster-munitions strikes, carried out by the FRY's armed forces and the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) between April and June 1999, also contributed to the unexploded ordnance (UXO) problem. Albania was also subject to mine-laying during the World Wars: mines were used by Austro-Hungarian forces in World War I and by Italian, German and British troops in World War II.

² See <http://data.worldbank.org/country/albania>

³ See <http://hdr.undp.org/en/content/human-development-index-hdi>

⁴ See <http://www.worldbank.org/en/country/albania/overview>

⁵ Quesaraku, M. & B. Baka (2015). *Security Sector Reform in Albania: Challenges and Failures Since the Collapse of Communism*. Accessible at <http://idmalbania.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/03/Security-sector-reform-in-Albania-Challenges-and-Failures-Since-the-Collapse-of-Communism.pdf>

⁶ *Idem*.

⁷ *Idem*.

Reports from 1998 indicate that mines laid during World War I were still being occasionally discovered. In addition, Albanian soldiers laid mines in 1949 during the conflict with Greece.

Non-technical surveys carried out after the Kosovo conflict originally identified approximately 15 km² of suspected hazardous areas along the Albanian/Kosovan border in the municipalities of Kukës, Has and Tropoje⁸. A total of 39 villages and approximately 25,000 people were affected. Over 80 percent of injuries related to mines and ERW occurred while people were engaged in livelihood activities (e.g. agriculture, herding animals and collecting water)⁹.



Map 1: Political map of Albania and its twelve counties

⁸ Albanian Mine Action Executive (AMAE) (2008). *Albania National Mine Action Plan for Completion 2009–2010*. Accessible at http://www.amae.org.al/Publications/Nat_Compl_Plan_2008-12.pdf

⁹ Cave, R., Lawson, A. & A. Sherriff (2006: 13). *Cluster Munitions in Albania and Lao PDR: The Humanitarian and Socio-Economic Impact*. United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research. Accessible at <http://www.unidir.org/files/publications/pdfs/cluster-munitions-in-albania-and-lao-pdr-the-humanitarian-and-socio-economic-impact-103.pdf>



Map 2: Close-up map of the municipalities of Tropoje, Has and Kukës in Kukës county¹⁰

Mine/ERW contamination on the border with Kosovo impeded the region's socio-economic development and exacerbated its social and economic exclusion from the rest of the country. On 29 February 2000, Albania ratified the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention (APMBC), and on 30 November 2009, nine months ahead of schedule, the Government of Albania fulfilled its obligations under Article 5 of the APMBC to destroy or ensure the destruction of all anti-personnel (AP) mines in known mined areas. Since 2000, through survey and clearance, Albania has released (cancelled, reduced or cleared) approximately 16 km² of land and destroyed:

- 12,452 anti-personnel mines
- 152 anti-vehicle mines
- 4,965 items of UXO¹¹

¹⁰ Albania Mine and Munitions Coordination Office (AMMCO), March 2016.

¹¹ Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining (GICHD) (2012a: 2f). *Transitioning Mine Action Programmes to National Ownership: Albania*. July 2012. Accessible at <http://www.gichd.org/fileadmin/GICHD/topics/transition/Transition-Albania-CaseStudy-Jul2012.pdf>

Albania signed the Convention on Cluster Munitions on 3 December 2008 and ratified it on 16 June 2009. It was among the first 30 countries to ratify the Convention and thus helped trigger its entry into force 1 August 2010. Albania had already announced the completion of clearance of all known unexploded submunitions in November 2009. In its initial transparency report for the Convention, Albania confirmed that it has never used, produced or stockpiled cluster munitions. Additionally, in 2013, Albania reported that it considered its existing legislation sufficient to implement the Convention's provisions¹².

In addition to its mine/ERW contamination, Albania has a problem with excess and unstable UXO or abandoned ordnance (AXO). Much of these munitions were previously stored in military depots from the time of the former communist regime. During the internal turmoil in Albania in 1997, 15 such munition depots were destroyed and looted. This reportedly led to the areas surrounding former depots becoming heavily contaminated by ERW. According to the AMAE National Plan for Completion 2009–2010, these ERW (AXO and UXO) led to accidents throughout the country, with 18 casualties recorded in 2007 alone¹³. The data relating to these accidents were reportedly collected in an IMSMA format by the Albanian Red Cross and other national NGOs.

Albania has defined areas contaminated by ERW as “Unexploded Ordnance Hotspots”. Of a total of 19 such areas identified, four remain to be cleared (status as of June 2017).

¹² <http://www.the-monitor.org/en-gb/reports/2016/albania/cluster-munition-ban-policy.aspx>

¹³ AMAE (2008).



Map 3: Map of unexploded ordnance hotspot clearance in Albania¹⁴

Institutional structures: history of the process of developing and transitioning to national capacities

Background to establishing the national mine/ERW programme

The inter-ministerial Albanian Mine Action Committee (AMAC) and the Albanian Mine Action Executive (AMAE) were established by the MoD in 1999. AMAC¹⁵, chaired by the Deputy Minister of Defence, functions as Albania's national mine action authority, overseeing policy-making, supervising the mine action programme and determining the overall direction of mine action. Until the fulfilment of APMBC Article 5 in November 2009, AMAC met regularly, oversaw the national mine action programme and facilitated inter-ministerial coordination¹⁶.

AMAE was initially established to implement, coordinate and monitor the national mine action programme and to serve as the national mine action centre. However, in March 2002, due to financial difficulties and a lack of expertise, the Albanian government agreed that UNDP Albania would provide direct financial and technical assistance to AMAE and that AMAC would play an

¹⁴ Albania Mine and Munitions Coordination Office (AMMCO), June 2017.

¹⁵ AMAC also includes members from the Ministries of Health and Education, Labour and Social Affairs, Finance, Foreign Affairs, and Economy. UNDP, UNICEF, ITF, donors and the Albanian Red Cross participate as observers.

¹⁶ GICHD (2012a: 4).

advisory role. AMAE was then administered as a project implementation unit, through the UNDP Direct Execution capacity-building project, to build mine action coordination and monitoring capacity. After having fulfilled APMBBC Article 5 in 2009, but after some deliberation and delays, AMAE was renamed the Albania Mine and Munitions Coordination Office (AMMCO). This new name better reflected the Office's fresh mandate of monitoring and coordinating unexploded ordnance-hotspot clearance operations, in addition to its existing Article 7 reporting obligations under the APMBBC and its victim assistance role.

Other relevant government structures

In 1999, the Albanian Armed Forces (AAF), in association with CARE International, conducted the first general survey of mine/ERW contaminated areas. Since 2004, the AAF has contributed to the national mine action programme with MEDEVAC support and explosive materials to destroy mines and UXO. It has also been involved in the destruction of AP landmine stockpiles through NATO's Maintenance and Supply Agency (NAMSA) and in clearing hotspot areas.

Though not historically involved in the mine action programme, Albania's State Police have developed national technical capacity via the Police Anti-Explosives Unit (Police EOD Unit), which is mandated to respond to incidents involving explosives, including mines or other ERW. This was one of the case study's key findings and is explored further in later sections.

Transition to national ownership

Over the past 15 years, Albania has made significant strides in harnessing international support to build its national capacity. AMAE/AMMCO has developed and implemented realistic survey and clearance plans, enabling the provisions of Article 5 to be fulfilled ahead of schedule. It has also put in place sustainable systems and structures for the physical and medical rehabilitation of mine/ERW survivors and for people with disabilities.

AMAE transition and challenges¹⁷

One of the key issues facing the Albanian programme has been its inability to institutionalise the management of mine/ERW-related issues into existing government architecture. Historically, one of UNDP's main goals in supporting Albania was the promotion of the national ownership and integration of AMAE within government structures¹⁸. This had been cited as an issue on a number of occasions:

- In 2007, a UNDP-commissioned evaluation¹⁹, conducted by the GICHD, assessed that at that time there was a clear lack of governmental enthusiasm to incorporate AMAE into its

¹⁷ GICHD conducted a "Transitioning Mine Action to National Ownership" study on Albania in 2012. The information contained in this section has largely been taken from that previous initiative. See link in earlier footnote.

¹⁸ Initially, this goal appears to have been seen as a broad capacity building endeavour, though as the programme progressed the term 'capacity building' became defined more narrowly in terms of the technical capacity to clear landmines. The more complex task of broader institutional capacity building appears to have lost momentum.

¹⁹ Kendellen, M., Naidoo, S. & F. Paktian (2007). *Evaluation of the Albanian Mine Action Programme*. Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining (GICHD). Accessible at <https://www.gichd.org/fileadmin/GICHD-resources/rec-documents/Report-GICHD-AlbaniaEvaluation-aug2007.pdf>

structure²⁰. This may have been partly because there was no clearly defined mission or purpose for AMAE after Albania had fulfilled its Convention obligations for mine/ERW clearance. With less than 2 km² of land still requiring clearance, and a plan to complete and close down the programme in a little under two years, the evaluation team considered it too late to spend further time and energy trying to integrate AMAE into the MoD. The evaluation therefore recommended that AMAE develop a specific plan to guide the closure of the mine action programme. However, that plan was not developed²¹.

- The “Albania National Mine Action Plan for Completion, 2009–2010”, written in 2008, effectively incorporated Albania’s transition plan. It specified that, following the closure of the mine action programme in March 2010, the responsibility for mine action would be transferred from UNDP to the MoD’s EOD Response Section²².
- In 2010, a UNDP assessment²³ found that:
“An important, but largely unfulfilled, promise of the UNDP project was to create a sustainable, self-sufficient national mine action capacity, one that is incorporated within the national government and managerially independent of UNDP. While the project has made remarkable achievements in terms of the technical capacity of AMAE, it has done relatively little to incorporate these capacities as a national institution. As previously noted, there are no laws that establish AMAE as a legal entity in Albania. Even though AMAE has attained a high degree of technical competence and autonomy, it relies on UNDP for its operational continuity.”

The UNDP assessment also stated clearly that:

“It is essential that a programme to incorporate AMAE as an Albanian institution with an official mandate from the Ministry of Defence is undertaken in parallel, to ensure the sustainability of the organisation and the legitimacy of AMAE to carry out a government mandate.”

Despite numerous references to the sustainability issue, no concrete plan for institutionalising AMAE within the existing government architecture was made. As such, administratively, AMAE remained a UNDP Direct Execution project-implementation unit for the duration of its existence²⁴.

Transition redefined – AMAE to AMMCO

It took the Government of Albania considerable time to recognise the wider value of the technical capacity that had been developed during mine action activities in the country. This changed in the wake of the Unplanned Explosion at a Munitions Site (UEMS), which occurred in Gërdec in March 2008. This UEMS killed 27 people, injured over 300 and resulted in the evacuation of more than 4,000 residents. The event also highlighted limitations in the AAFs ability to

²⁰ The report found that despite concerted efforts, including the drafting of the legislation required to facilitate AMAE’s incorporation into the Ministry of Defence, the issue was not perceived as a government priority.

²² AMAE (2008).

²³ UNDP Bureau for Crisis Response and Recovery (BCPR) (2010). *Assessment of the Albanian Mine Action Executive (AMAE) & Transition Plan*, Final Report. Referenced in GICHD (2012a) p.24 <http://www.gichd.org/fileadmin/GICHD/topics/transition/Transition-Albania-CaseStudy-Jul2012.pdf>

²⁴ GICHD (2012a).

coordinate and manage an emergency response, which in turn helped to slowly shift the mind-set within the government²⁵.

In late 2009, the Albanian government and UNDP began to discuss the option of using AMAE to address residual²⁶ contamination by ERW and surplus ammunition stockpiles. The September 2010 assessment report strongly supported this initiative, based on the clear need to monitor and coordinate the safe disposal of ammunition stockpiles and to survey and clear hotspot areas²⁷.

At this juncture, planning for 'transition' appears to have shifted from a discussion that centred on sustainable government institutional architecture to one that focussed much more on a thematic shift between traditional mine action activities and what was termed Armed Violence Reduction (AVR)²⁸ programming. In this case, AVR in support of the Albanian government's 'demilitarisation'²⁹ priorities.

A 2011 transition implementation plan recognised that AMAE's mine action capacities: "...along with the available equipment and infrastructure established during the course of the mine action programme are assets that can contribute further to demilitarisation efforts including the hotspots clearance contaminated by Explosive Remnants of War (ERW) and Abandoned Unexploded Ordnance (AXO)."³⁰ Even so, the process was slow, delayed and did not proceed according to a clear, well-defined transition plan³¹.

AMAE was renamed AMMCO, reflecting its new role and mandate, and on 1 November 2011, the Government of Albania and UNDP formally agreed to use AMMCO to monitor and coordinate the clearance of the 19 hotspot areas across the country³².

UNDP currently views AMMCO as a mine action programme evolving into an initiative for: removing and destroying residual³³ ammunition and weaponry from communist times; assisting

²⁵ Using Mine Action Capacity for UXO Hotspots, Albania Mine and Munitions Coordination and DanChurchAid, GICHD, December 2012.

²⁶ This document pre-dates the IMAS definition of residual contamination.

²⁷ Assessment of the Albanian Mine Action Executive (AMAE) & Transition Plan, Final Report, UN Bureau of Crisis Prevention and Recovery, September 2010. (Referenced in GICHD 2012, *Using Mine Action Capacity for UXO Hotspots, Albania Mine and Munitions Coordination and DanChurchAid p.5*)

²⁸ In this context, AVR refers mainly to ERW hotspot clearance.

²⁹ Demilitarisation refers to "...the complete range of processes that render weapons, ammunition, mines and explosives unfit for their originally intended purpose. Demilitarisation not only involves the final destruction process, but also includes all of the other transport, storage, accounting and pre-processing operations that are as critical to achieving the final result." South-east European Surplus Arms: State Policies and Practices", Issue Brief, No.1, November 2010, Small Arms Survey and the Regional Approach to Stockpile Reduction (RASR).

³¹ GICHD (2012b). *Using Mine Action Capacity for UXO Hotspots, Albania Mine and Munitions Coordination and DanChurchAid*, September 2012. Accessible at https://www.gichd.org/fileadmin/GICHD/topics/development/ma_development-2/AVR/AVR-Albania-case-study-Sep2012.pdf

³² The memorandum of understanding of November 2011 signed by the Ministry of Defence and UNDP officially approved AMMCO's new mandate, following the MOD's request that mine action capacity should support national demilitarisation efforts. Further, the AMMCO Transition Implementation Plan listed the objective of eventually incorporating the AMAE into the already established Demilitarisation Committee of the MOD. Accordingly, AMAE became AMMCO, assuming the new roles and responsibilities in the UXO Hotspots Programme. - Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining (GICHD) (2012a: 2f). *Transitioning Mine Action Programmes to National Ownership: Albania*. July 2012. Accessible at <http://www.gichd.org/fileadmin/GICHD/topics/transition/Transition-Albania-CaseStudy-Jul2012.pdf>

³³ The term 'residual', in this context, refers to remaining ammunition and weaponry, rather than the IMAS definition linked to 'residual risk'

mine victims, through the establishment of specialised units at Kukës hospital; and supporting the integration of mine victims into economic life and activities³⁴.

The issue of incorporating AMMCO into government structures persists today. The 2012 GICHD study on transition in Albania referred to the fact that there were no plans in place to integrate AMMCO within the MoD or any other government structure or ministry. This, it was noted, was despite the acknowledgement by AMMCO, UNDP and others that AMMCO should, in theory, be part of the government. The study also recommended that, based on AMAE's experiences, AMMCO should develop a detailed plan to address issues surrounding its integration within the government, running down its operations and moving towards an eventual closure.

More broadly, UNDP has recognised that the challenges of working with some government institutions have sometimes led to a “perverse incentive for UNDP to deliver programmes directly, rather than through government institutions” and that this can in fact hamper capacity development for national partners and compromise the sustainability of outcomes³⁵.

Current structure

The relationship between the MoD and UNDP is formalised through Memoranda of Understanding (MoU). The last MoU, for the period 2013–2015, is currently being updated and extended to cover 2016–2018, at which point AMMCO believes that the clearance of all remaining hotspots will have been completed.

From a purely technical perspective, AMMCO has evolved alongside the changing context. This allowed its mandate to be broadened, its workforce to become entirely indigenous, and it is now housed within and operates from the main MoD building in Tirana. However, in terms of formal integration into government, the situation remains largely unchanged. At present, AMMCO is not formally integrated within the Government of Albania and thus remains a Direct Execution project-implementation unit of UNDP. As such, this stated objective of integration has not yet been achieved. Additionally, whether there is a role for AMMCO after hotspot clearance has been completed (and what such a role might be) remains somewhat unclear.

Technical focus: coordination and capacity-building

AMMCO is operating, in line with its updated mandate, as the coordination body responsible for the management and QA of hotspot clearance operations and the maintenance of the national IMSMA database.

Additionally, the organisation is involved in providing capacity-building support to the AAF. Specifically, this relates to the introduction and development of IMAS-compliant QA systems and processes, on-the-job training through credible external QA and quality control (QC), as well as providing technical advice on updating³⁶ and formalising new national standards on explosive ordnance disposal³⁷. In addition to this support, AMMCO has historically donated equipment to the AAF. The AAF EOD Company received 50 percent of the equipment left behind by mine action operators following 2009's declaration of the fulfilment of Article 5.

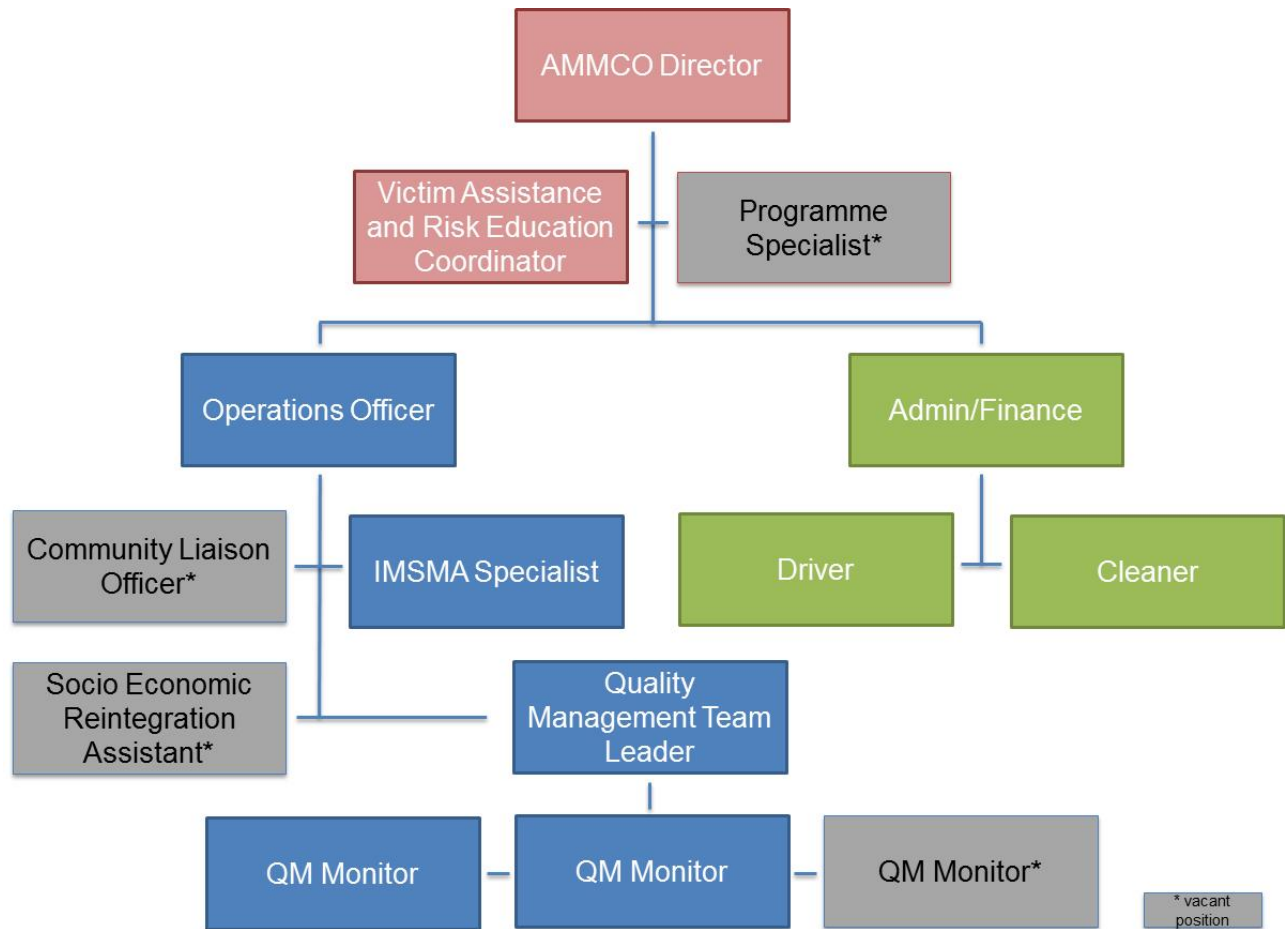
³⁴ Independent Evaluation Office (2016). *Assessment of Development Results: Albania, Evaluation of UNDP Contribution*, May 2016. Accessible at http://www.al.undp.org/content/dam/albania/docs/ADR_Albania_EN_2015.pdf?download

³⁵ Independent Evaluation Office (2016).

³⁶ The existing EOD Handbook was published in 2004.

³⁷ Interview with AMMCO Director, June 2016.

AMMCO is currently composed of nine staff³⁸, as detailed in the organigram below:



Four staff positions are currently vacant due to a shortage of funding. AMMCO reports that these positions would be filled were funding to be made available.

There is currently only one international mine action operator working in Albania under the direction of AMMCO. Norwegian People's Aid (NPA) has been operating in-country since 2014. Its primary focus is the clearance of the 19 hotspots which resulted from unplanned explosions at ammunition storage areas during a period of civil unrest in 1997³⁹. At the time of writing, two hotspots remain on NPA's operational work plan. NPA has secured funding to complete its hotspot operations by the end of 2017, at which point the organisation intends to leave Albania.

All parties agree that AMMCO is currently fulfilling its mandate as the national authority on proactive mine action activities. It was noted that much of the organisation's ongoing ability to operate can be attributed to the charismatic approach and consummate work ethic of its Director, Mr Arben Braha. AMMCO has clearly developed an in-depth understating of both national and international mine action architectures, fundraising, and donor requirements for

³⁸ AMMCO staff are all on UNDP salaried contracts.

³⁹ Norwegian People's Aid. Accessible at <https://www.npaid.org/Our-Work/Countries-we-work-in/Europe/Humanitarian-Disarmament-in-Albania>

accountability and reporting. This has allowed AMMCO to continually mobilise both the financial and technical resources to support the national capacity that has been built up over the life of the mine action programme.

The sustainability of such an approach is questionable, however. In order for the longer-term functions of residual contamination management to be sustainable, key positions must be integrated into existing government structures. In addition, information management needs must be assessed, and resources made available to implement future information requirements.

In particular, relying so completely on the skills of one individual, rather than on a more institutionalised set of competencies, means that the organisation is continually operating with the risk of losing focus, leadership and its ability to continually learn and adapt. A more effective, long-term solution is needed if AMMCO plans to operate beyond the end of 2017.

In terms of information management, AMMCO currently utilises IMSMA V6 to manage historical mine action and current hotspot clearance data. Responsibility for data entry and maintenance lies with a dedicated IMSMA operator. The IMSMA operator has been trained by the GICHD and is currently certified to operator 'level A1' (data entry) standard. The GICHD has also provided training in IMSMA data entry to two AAF officers, though this has reportedly been carried out on more of an ad-hoc basis than as part of a wider transition initiative.

Although there have been in-country discussions on the viability of handing over responsibility for the IMSMA database to the AAF, to date no final decision or work plan has been made or agreed. As such, the management and archiving of all operational mine action data remains under the remit of UNDP rather than the government.

Addressing residual contamination

What is residual contamination?

The International Mine Action Standards (IMAS) define residual risk, in the context of humanitarian demining, as “the risk remaining following the application of all reasonable efforts to remove and/or destroy all mine or ERW hazards from a specified area to a specified depth.”⁴⁰

‘Residual contamination’ refers to contamination which gives rise to residual risk⁴¹. Building upon this, it is logical to understand residual contamination as mines and other ERW still discovered on sites after the application of all reasonable efforts to survey/identify and process (cancel, reduce or clear) all known suspected hazardous areas (SHAs) and confirmed hazardous areas (CHAs) in a given locality.

⁴⁰ IMAS 04.10 (2003). *Glossary of mine action terms, definitions and abbreviations*. Accessible at <http://www.mineactionstandards.org/fileadmin/MAS/documents/imas-international-standards/english/series-04/IMAS-04-10-Ed2-Am6.pdf>

⁴¹ GICHD (2016). *IMAS Review Board Meeting Minutes*, 15 February 2016. Accessible at http://www.mineactionstandards.org/fileadmin/MAS/documents/review-board/minutes/withDate_Final_Minutes_of_IMAS_RB_meeting_held_on_15Feb2016.pdf

Nature and extent of residual contamination in Albania

The proactive effort aimed at removing all known minefields ended with the fulfilment of APMBC Article 5 in November 2009. Current operations deployed to remove the threat posed by the remaining ERW hotspots constitute the remaining proactive effort in Albania. Upon completion of this work, Albania will have processed all its known ERW threats.

Once all known ERW threats have been dealt with, only a residual risk remains. This has been clearly established based both on experiences from other countries involved in conflict⁴² and on evidence gathered in Albania (such as recorded EOD call-out responses to previously unknown hazards since 2009).

Reactive management of the risks posed by residual contamination will certainly require a different approach to that which has been utilised during the proactive clearance phase. This will probably mean a change in the established institutional architecture as well as the development of updated systems, tools and processes, all of which will be heavily reliant on the data/information that is available to assess risk. Detailed analysis of the actual contamination associated with residual risk is somewhat difficult to predict, however, in the absence of high-quality data sources.

IMSMA currently records data on clearance (historical and current), accidents and casualties, but does not contain records of any reactive EOD interventions carried out by clearance teams operating under the coordination of AMAE or AMMCO. This is a reflection of the fact that AMMCO does not have the mandate to monitor EOD callouts. At the time of the GICHD's field visit, the last accident recorded in IMSMA was reportedly a mine accident that occurred in Kukës in April 2005⁴³.

Data provided by the Police EOD Unit indicates that, since 2008, a total of 201 ERW removal interventions have been performed by the state, finding and removing/destroying 2,274 items of ERW. The vast majority of items found (82 percent) are artillery shells; other types of ERW are varied. ERW have been found in every region of Albania, but the number of ERW removal interventions performed varies considerably by county. To date, no AP mines have been recorded during Police EOD Unit response operations. ERW are generally found "during ground excavation to a depth of greater than one meter" and/or "after erosion caused by streams or landslides."⁴⁴ Despite some limitations in the dataset provided, the availability of relevant data does present an opportunity for analysis.

⁴² GICHD (2015). *Management of Residual ERW (MORE) Long-term ERW management in Southeast Asia - Lessons from Europe*. Accessible at https://www.gichd.org/fileadmin/GICHD-resources/rec-documents/MORE_Issue_Briefs-June2015.pdf

⁴³ This was the information stored in IMSMA at the time the GICHD's field research was completed. Since then, and as a result of the GICHD's intervention, IMSMA has been updated, as detailed in the Information and data management section below.

⁴⁴ Report provided by Albanian State Police EOD Unit, translated from Albanian to English by AMMCO.

Existing national institutions, current mandates and capacity to address residual contamination

AMMCO

UNDP views its programme as one that is dealing with residual ammunition and weaponry from communist times⁴⁵ (however, this is not based on the IMAS definition of residual contamination). At a working level, AMMCO engages closely with the AAF, for example by coordinating work on ERW hotspot clearance, including QA and completion certification. AMMCO envisages that the AAF EOD Company will hold responsibility for dealing with any residual contamination once hotspot clearance is completed. Apparently, some consensus has been achieved around this notion at the working level, but it has yet to be discussed and agreed upon at the political level. The MoD has also recently undertaken to update national standards on EOD.

Albanian Armed Forces Explosive Ordnance Disposal Company (AAF EOD Company)

The AAF EOD Company is made up of approximately 80 soldiers and has serviceable equipment which has either been donated or procured. The MoD feels that this number is sustainable and plans to keep the company staffed at this level for the foreseeable future⁴⁶. AAF EOD Company is currently conducting ERW hotspot clearance under the coordination and QA of AMMCO. It is also providing limited QC of NPA's hotspot operations and is responsible for carrying out the actual demolition of ordnance found by NPA teams.

Since 2014, AAF EOD Company has been keeping a database of the instances when it has dealt with call-outs, these include;

- Incidents where AMMCO has been alerted (using the '129' hotline number);
- Items which have been shown to NPA teams by members of the public, and;
- Items which have been investigated by the Police EOD Unit and deemed not to be related to criminal activity.

Despite assurances that their records are maintained and stored, the study team was not provided with any actual data during its field visit. AMMCO has attempted to secure a dataset, but at the time of writing, this has yet to materialise. A greater understanding of the information available would improve understanding of the current situation and in turn be beneficial for the planning and deployment of any future residual response systems.

State Police Anti-Explosives Unit (Police EOD Unit)

The Anti-Explosives Unit falls within the Albanian State Police's Directorate of Special Forces, and it is mandated to respond to ammunition and emergency ERW call-outs across the entire country⁴⁷. The Unit comprises of ten staff, all of whom have an engineering background – a prerequisite for joining. Some of the staff were trained at the military academy. However, it is understood that the academy is no longer providing new students to the police.

⁴⁵ Independent Evaluation Office (2016).

⁴⁶ Interview with Deputy Minister of Defence, Petro Koci, June 2016.

⁴⁷ Some exceptions exist, for example: Tirana International Airport falls within the responsibility of a separate explosives team from the National Guard.

When responding to a call-out, a primary task is to investigate the site for any criminal links to the explosives found. Similarly, the unit is also involved in crime scene investigation where explosions have occurred. In cases involving criminal incidents, the police are in charge of further investigations. In the absence of any criminal characteristics, however, the Anti-Explosives Unit stated that it would transfer the call-out to the AAF EOD Company for disposal of the explosive items found.

The police's Anti-Explosives Unit has additional duties, including searching buildings and facilities where bombs or other explosive ordnance may be located, as well as searching and securing buildings and facilities where VIP activities are carried out.

The Police EOD Unit has developed its own standard operating procedures (SOPs). These are reputedly based on its own experience rather than any national or international standards. The Unit was unable to provide a copy of its SOPs during the GICHD's country visit as permission was required from a higher authority⁴⁸. The Unit also maintains a record of its interventions, which includes details of munition types (split into broad categories) found, transported and destroyed from 2008 onwards, disaggregated by county. The records provided by the Police EOD Unit constituted the only dataset on reactive ERW response that was made available to the GICHD during this case study. Interviews concerning the political situation, with both the MoD and the Mol, indicated that there is an ongoing discussion within the Albanian government regarding who will hold the mandate to provide the technical response when residual contamination is found. It therefore appears that two technical response systems have evolved. Even though the Police EOD Unit and the AAF EOD Company do not respond to the same call-outs, there exist separate institutional architectures operating under different line ministries and in some cases they work in parallel with one another. AMMCO is not currently involved in coordinating residual response for either of these entities.

Military-to-military support

Partner countries' policies on what support can be provided to the AAF EOD Company appear to differ somewhat. The AAF EOD Company reported that it was currently receiving bilateral support, in the form of EOD training and certification, from the United States of America. In the first half of 2016, a three-week EOD level 1 course was provided to selected actors, reportedly including at least one member from the Police EOD Unit. Further courses aimed at providing higher-level training (EOD 2 and 3) are planned for 2017 and 2018 respectively, although it is unclear whether police participants will be invited to these courses.

The German Defence Attaché advised that his country's ability to provide bilateral support of this kind had shifted since Albania joined NATO⁴⁹. Germany is unable to provide further direct 'capacity-building' support because NATO members are deemed, by definition, to have adequate capacity. The rules dictate that any partnership interventions must be bilateral in nature. This effectively means that in order for the German military to train Albanian forces, German soldiers would need to receive training from Albanian instructors in return. At the time of writing, the German MoD had not identified any areas where its soldiers would benefit from training led by the AAF.

⁴⁸ AMMCO has since followed up and confirmed that the SOPs are considered sensitive and will not be shared.

⁴⁹ Interview with German Defence Attaché, Guido Altendorf, June 2016.

Co-operation

A recent step forward in inter-agency communication has been the creation of a technical working group to update the 2004 EOD handbook, with the aim of ensuring that national standards are brought up to date and in line with IMAS. The working group was established on 13 June 2016 and is spearheaded by AMMCO. It meets every quarter and includes EOD technicians from the AAF, experts from the Logistics Troops School and experts from the Support Command. The Police EOD Unit is not yet a member but is considering joining. AMMCO attends all meetings, but UNDP is not formally a member. NPA has expressed interest in attending but has not yet been invited to any meetings.

This technical working group could also provide an effective platform for dialogue on other issues, such as roles and responsibilities with regards to the management of residual contamination.

Existing ERW Reporting System

The existing emergency services reporting system seems to have been a key component in the development of residual responses. In June 2016, following the European model, Albania introduced a general emergency services number (112). A caller using this number will be routed through to the appropriate Albanian emergency service provider. It can reportedly be dialled whenever ammunition, residual mines or other explosive ordnance are found anywhere in the country. Concurrently, risk education material produced by AMMCO indicates that a specific hotline number (129)⁵⁰ should be used in the event of ammunition being found by a member of the public. The material indicates that this line is staffed 24 hours/day. Testing whether or not either system was operational and effective was within the scope of the study. What is clear is that such calls are firstly taken by the closest police station and are then transferred to the Police EOD Unit in Tirana. Some anecdotal evidence gathered suggests that civilians tend to report ERW findings to the organisations working in their area or with which they are most familiar⁵¹.

Information and data management

There are currently (at least) four separate databases used to record ERW-related information:

- The IMSMA system has been developed to collect detailed information about the proactive phase of mine action (survey and clearance). It contains a wealth of historical information about specific areas where mine action has been conducted. High-quality georeferenced data can be a key tool for decision-makers who are trying to assess the level of residual risk at a given location during the residual contamination phase. As such, the years' worth of field data already recorded in IMSMA is highly valuable.
- Although it is assumed that the AAF have some type of data storage and analysis capability, it has been impossible to assess the detail and quality of that data, as no datasets have been made available to the GICHD.
- A Police EOD Unit database has been set up as a record of state-funded responses to the threat posed by ERW, including from criminal activity and residual risk. This database appears to be fairly simple in design (hard copy data were presented and appeared to have been manually entered). Although there are potentially some limitations stemming from this approach to information management, the data provided, which is

⁵⁰ Current Albania risk education leaflet, date unknown.

⁵¹ NPA Albania has reported being asked to attend call-outs; details are then forwarded to the AAF EOD Company for demolition.

disaggregated at the county/country level, represented the most meaningful approximation of state-managed residual risk that has been made available to the GICHD. Additionally, this approach has been implemented using national resources since 2009 and appears to be broadly sustainable.

- Alb-Aid, a local NGO, has been keeping records of additional ERW-related accidents (those not previously stored in IMSMA) identified during a socio-economic and medical needs assessment that it conducted between 2015 and 2016⁵². Depending on how these records are georeferenced, this data could be very relevant when attempting to define and map the impact of residual risk on affected communities⁵³.

A simple example was highlighted during the study visit: initially, the study team were led to believe that there had been no reports of residual contamination in the Kukës region (where the bulk of internationally implemented mine action operations have been undertaken). It later transpired that the Police EOD Unit had been called out to Kukës three times since 2009. The disparity was the result of AMMCO only having first-hand access to two out of the three operational databases (IMSMA and AAF EOD Company). In order to be able to have a comprehensive country overview, it would seem beneficial to have one centralised database with all records on file. At the time of writing, it is understood that AMMCO has taken an important first step towards this by integrating Alb-Aid data into IMSMA. However, it is understood that there are currently no plans either to integrate operational datasets or to assign responsibility for ERW data to a single organisation or focal point.

Examples of projects affected by residual contamination

The Trans Adriatic Pipeline (TAP) project is the European leg of a complex value chain of energy projects known as the Southern Gas Corridor. The aim of the corridor is to improve the security and diversity of the EU's energy supply by bringing natural gas from the Caspian region to Europe⁵⁴. This is a major investment project: the pipeline will run from Greece, through Albania and then to Italy (approximately 211 km of pipeline will run through Albania⁵⁵). In 2014, TAP commissioned a UK-based firm called RPS to conduct a desk study for potential ERW. The study identified various potential high, moderate and low-risk areas running the length of the planned pipeline. It also recommended that field verifications be carried out in high-risk areas. TAP has since contacted both NPA and the AAF directly to request support in conducting such assessments. NPA reports that it referred TAP back to AMMCO. It is understood that the AAF EOD Company has completed some limited assessment work on behalf of the TAP project and that it is awaiting confirmation on whether further assistance will be required⁵⁶.

AMMCO and the AAF EOD Company both independently reported an incident involving a road construction project in 2012, when the AAF EOD Company was called out to carry out a demolition on behalf of a Greek-owned construction company that was building a road between Tirana and the village of Berzhita, in Elbasan county. The AAF EOD Company informed AMMCO, who visited the site to provide advice, and then the AAF EOD Company completed the demolition.

⁵² See <http://albaid.al/>

⁵³ This data was imported into IMSMA in April 2017.

⁵⁴ See <https://www.tap-ag.com/>

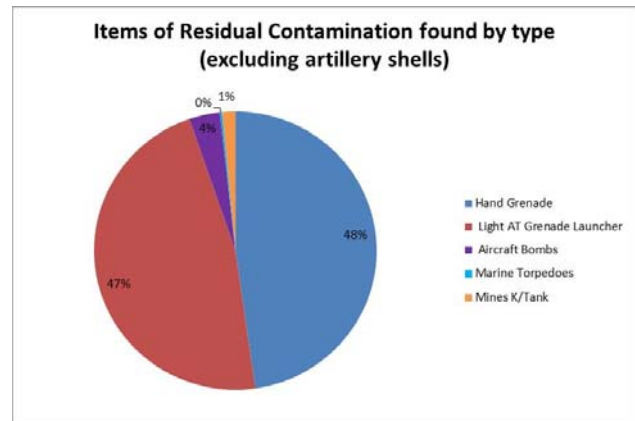
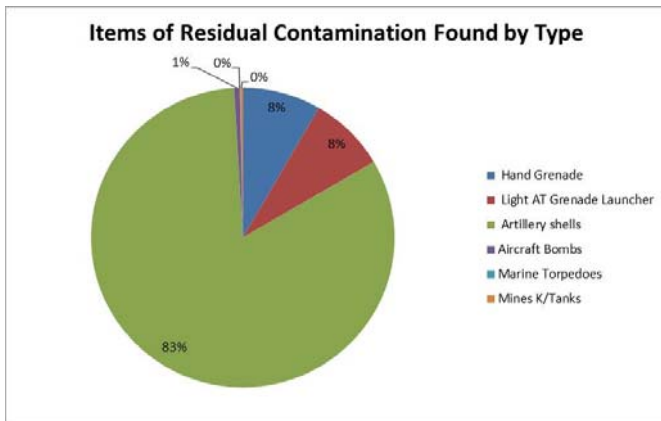
⁵⁵ RPS Desk Study, February 2014 (shared by AMMCO).

AMMCO also reported having some limited contact with Shell Oil, facilitated through the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE). Shell had reportedly requested information on ERW risk ahead of a drilling project in Mbreshtan, Berat county. AMMCO provided a briefing on hotspot clearance in July 2015 but has had no further contact with the company.

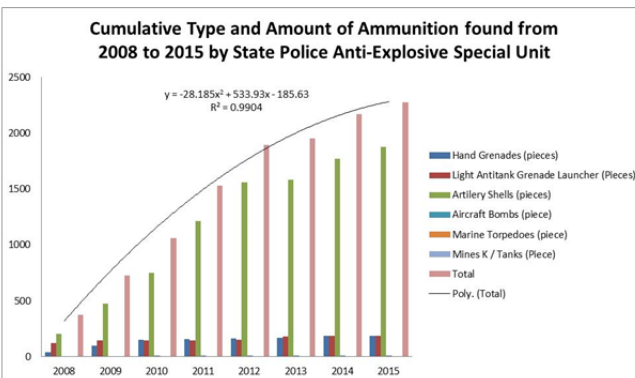
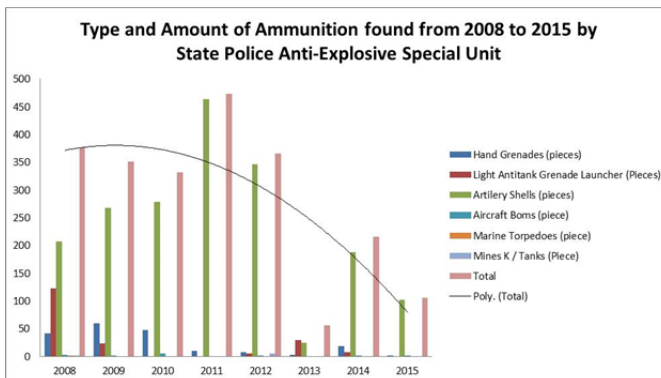
Analysis of available national datasets (Police EOD Unit data)

The dataset provided by the Police EOD Unit represents a valuable asset for government decision-makers who might wish to make strategic decisions on residual risk response based on actual evidence. Although the data are somewhat limited in terms of the level of detail about each individual call-out, a basic analysis identifies the common munition types/categories encountered and highlights a visible trend in the way the level of requirement for residual response has evolved since APMBC Article 5 completion.

The pie charts below provide a breakdown of the types of ERW which the Police EOD Unit has come into contact with (2009–2015).

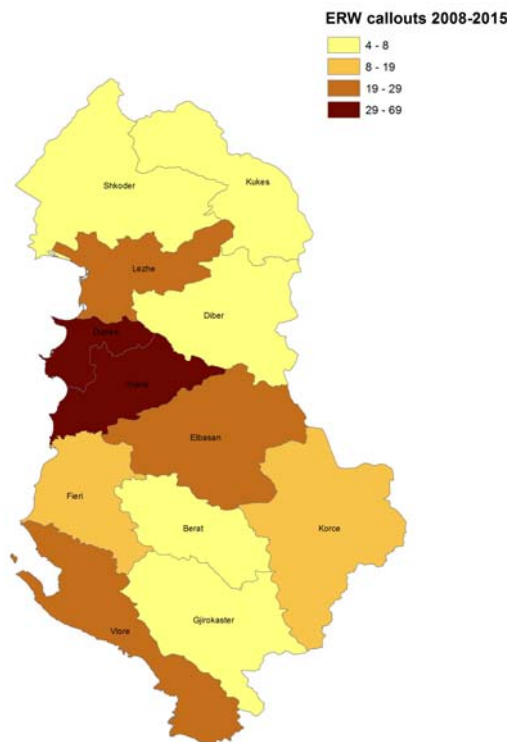


This evidence, combined with the report that items are usually buried deeper than one meter below the surface, suggests that the most appropriate reactive residual management systems for Albania should be based primarily on a requirement to mitigate the risk posed by artillery ammunition located at depth.



The graphs above highlight clear trends. The graph on the left indicates that the amount of residual contamination being brought to the attention of the Police EOD Unit is in decline, with far fewer items of ERW reported in 2015 than in 2008. When looked at from a cumulative

perspective, the trend line is beginning to plateau as fewer and fewer items are added year on year.



Map 4: Location of residual contamination call-outs in Albania 2008–2015 ⁵⁷

The map above shows where the Police EOD Unit provided ERW response interventions between 2008 and 2015. Based on these data, it can be inferred that the unit is appropriately located in the capital city and that more residual contamination has been reported in the central and southern regions, areas where there has historically been less support from international operators.

These analyses are examples of the value of relevant historical information, even where the dataset is limited. A more in-depth analysis, including more localised risk profiling, might be possible in Albania, were a dataset which combined AAF, AMMCO and Police EOD Unit records to be made available. Future decision-makers and development initiatives would surely benefit from an increased understanding of the residual risk of ERW.

Sustainability and funding

Between 1999 and 2009, national and international funding for mine action in Albania was estimated at USD 31.7 million, including in-kind contributions. AMMCO has received in-kind support from the Government of Albania for a number of years, including office space at the MoD premises since 2013, MEDEVAC and helicopter support, as well as EOD services provided to NPA for the transportation and demolition of ammunition⁵⁸. Until becoming a member of

⁵⁷ Based on data provided to the GICHD by the State EOD Police

⁵⁸ International Campaign to Ban Landmines. *Landmine Monitor, Albania. 2002–2010.*

NATO in 2009, Albania was eligible for the organisation's Partnership for Peace (PfP) programme, which enables practical bilateral military-to-military cooperation between individual Euro-Atlantic countries and NATO.

Financial resources have mainly been provided by the international community. Previously, the International Trust Fund (ITF) Enhancing Human Security provided financial support for quality management (QM) and equipment. At the time of the GICHD country visit, UNDP/AMMCO was funded by the German Federal Foreign Office (GFFO), whose funding cycle ended in December 2016 with no further commitment being made. For 2017, only limited additional funding has been provided by the U.S. Department of State, Office of Weapons Removal and Abatement (PM/WRA), to UNDP, through the ITF. The reduced funding available has meant that some AMMCO staff, including the IMSMA specialist, have been put on part-time (50 percent) contracts for 2017 and QM staff are only contracted for nine months of the year. When current funding runs out, it appears that there are few prospects for further support from international sources.

In terms of attracting new funding, AMMCO's status as a UNDP project managed independently from the Government of Albania has notable advantages and disadvantages.

On the positive side:

- Some stakeholders believe that the organisation's independence from government allows it to conduct its monitoring and coordination duties more neutrally, relatively free from the perceived pressures that affect internal government monitoring bodies;
- Furthermore, external donors feel more confident about the QC of funding streams and AMMCO's expenditure reporting.

However:

- Despite the valuable in-kind contributions provided to AMMCO, there is currently no concrete plan to integrate the organisation into existing government architecture. Conversely, both the AAF EOD Company and the Police EOD Unit are national entities, staffed by Albanian government employees funded by the state budget;
- Given the current situation, and despite its relatively low operating costs, it is difficult to see a role for AMMCO in its current form once the last ERW hotspot has been cleared.

It is extremely important that effort is put into using the expertise and resources established within AMMCO to begin setting up the institutional structures within the government that will manage residual risk in the most appropriate and efficient manner possible. Ensuring that there is clarity on roles and responsibilities regarding residual risk, including EOD call-out response, database management and evidence-based risk management processes, are important objectives that should be pursued as soon as possible.

Ideally, UNDP should develop a formal transition (to government) strategy for AMMCO, or a plan for its closure, which includes direction on how relevant competencies could be absorbed into government departments. This should be done as a matter of urgency, be accompanied by a detailed implementation plan, including measurable outputs and outcomes, and be approved by the relevant ministries.

Concluding remarks

Albania is a good example of an APMB State Party that has been provided with significant support from other States Parties and the wider international community. All the evidence

suggests that Albania has effectively solved its AP mine problem and, aside from limited and well-defined 'ERW hotspots' the state is only now faced with the consequences of any residual risk.

AMMCO continues to be a UNDP Direct Execution project-implementation unit operating as the national authority on mine action activities. Although all parties agree that it is fulfilling this mandate, there seems to be less consensus, particularly at the political level, over whether the management of residual contamination falls within the remit of 'mine action'.

AMMCO and the AAF EOD Company (operating under the broader MoD umbrella) share an informally agreed perspective which sees responsibility for dealing with residual contamination falling to the AAF. AMMCO has a strong working relationship with the AAF EOD Company and has invested time and resources to provide mentoring and technical advice in an attempt to ensure that residual risk will be managed effectively in the long term. Simultaneously, another national capacity developed under the umbrella of the MoI, taking the form of a smaller Police EOD Unit. The Police EOD Unit has been responding to residual contamination call-outs in every region of the country since at least 2008.

In terms of information management, there are at least three different databases separately recording and storing ERW-related data. The information stored in these systems is likely to be of high value to whichever actor is eventually mandated with managing residual risk in Albania. At the time of writing, these datasets are not linked or coordinated, meaning that the three organisations operating on ERW-related issues do not have a clear vision of each other's activities. There currently appears to be no plan in place to centralise and manage ERW information.

This case study highlights the importance of structured, long-term, strategic mine-action planning, including a comprehensive and properly implemented exit strategy. The mine action sector in Albania has developed capable and effective national actors that have all but completed their mandates. What has apparently been less successful is the sector's ability to adapt to the changing situation as its proactive efforts draw to a close. Whereas it is commendable that the technical capacities developed have managed to temporarily transition into support for demilitarisation efforts, this still represents a relatively short-term approach that relies heavily on external funding.

The decision not to integrate AMMCO within the government's architecture has led to serious questions about its future role and stability. At this point in the cycle of mine action in Albania, when the financial resources provided by the international community are all but exhausted, it is key that some time, effort and a proportion of what resources remain are used for re-assessing and responding to the threat posed by residual contamination. To date, the management of residual contamination in Albania has been a parallel initiative, outside of the mine action sector, using national institutions. Good practice would now indicate the need to change direction in favour of establishing a more structured and effective response to the residual context.

It is imperative that UNDP and AMMCO develop a plan that details what they intend to do once ERW hotspot clearance is complete. Ideally, this should include information on how to ensure that valuable assets, such as key staff, institutional knowledge and the IMSMA database, are transitioned into existing government institutions.

Key findings: good practices, main challenges and lessons learnt

Good practices

National capacities

Albania has developed strong, competent national capacity. Although AMMCO is still a UNDP-managed initiative, its staff is entirely Albanian. The AAF EOD Company and the Police EOD Unit are nationally managed and funded through government networks and systems.

Understanding international systems

Via an understanding of international systems and institutional architecture, AMMCO and the AAF have continued to draw on international donor support and (more appropriately) military-to-military cooperation, respectively, to deal with EOD and technical issues.

Development of hotlines

Albania has set up and advertised an emergency hotline specifically for reporting ERW-related issues. This gave members of the public the ability to alert the relevant authorities directly during the proactive operational phase. More recently, a centralised general emergency number has been rolled out allowing communities that come across ERW to notify the state's central emergency services. This appears to be an appropriate evolution in terms of a national response to the issues involved in both the proactive and residual contexts.

Negotiation of in-kind support

Despite some ongoing political constraints, AMMCO has been able to negotiate fairly significant in-kind support, especially from the MoD. This is the result of effective relationship-building between (some) partner organisations working on similar ERW-related issues. This is also an important precedent for the absorption of residual contamination management by national institutions.

Importance of financial transparency

Albania can be commended for having been able to retain an appropriate level of international support even after its main clearance effort was complete. This is in part due to its understanding of the importance that the international community places in financial transparency, and the recognition that confidence is more easily conveyed through a recognised international institution such as UNDP.

Main challenges and lessons learnt

Development of a plan for transition that would ensure both effective implementation of programming and long-term sustainability

The decision to focus efforts on fulfilling APMBBC Article 5 rather than integrating mine action activities into the MoD has had lasting implications. Because AMMCO has never been formally

integrated into the Albanian government, it has little or no chance of remaining sustainable, and its role will certainly be called into question after hotspot clearance is completed.

Internal difficulties in achieving consensus among numerous government stakeholders

It appears that a lack of political consensus between the MoD and the Mol has had an impact on the management and operational deployment of responses to residual contamination. This is most evident in the fact that residual-response systems have been developed separately (by the AAF EOD Company and the Police EOD Unit). The deployment of comparable technical capacities through completely separate command structures has the potential to cause confusion. Additionally, supervision by separate authorities has affected the inclusiveness of the newly established technical working group on EOD (which is otherwise a very good initiative).

Information management

The deployment of separate mine action structures has led to the development of at least three separate operational databases. Despite the unquestionable value of having access to quality information when making ERW risk management decisions, there does not as yet appear to be any plan to centralise or standardise data storage capacity.

Annexes

Annex I: Individuals interviewed

Name	Title	Organisation
Arben Braha	Director	AMMCO
Veri Dogjani	VA/RE Coordinator	AMMCO
Luan Shaba	Operations Officer	AMMCO
Ermira Keraj	IMSMA Specialist	AMMCO
Haredin Kryeziu	QM Team Leader	AMMCO
Hydajet Pista	QM Monitor	AMMCO
Petro Koci	Deputy Minister of Defence	Albanian Ministry of Defence
Guido Altendorf	Defence Attaché covering Albania and FYR of Macedonia (until August 2016)	German Embassy in Tirana
Altin Qato	General Director of Public Security (incl. portfolio of SALW)	Albanian Ministry of Interior
Police EOD Unit	In charge of responding to EOD call-outs country-wide	Albanian Ministry of Interior
Colonel Fatmir Lokaj	Commander of Support Command (incl. EOD Company)	Albanian Armed Forces
Kastriot Velçani	Beneficiary of hotspot clearance	County of Berat
Elizabeth Hilburg	Analyst – Political section	U.S. Embassy in Albania
Eva Veble	Country Director, Albania	Norwegian People's Aid

Annex II: National capacities and residual contamination study terms of reference

National capacities and residual contamination – country case study of Albania

Introduction

National ownership is a central principle of the overall mine action approach, and this is reflected in international conventions and standards. As an increasing number of mine/ERW-affected countries are approaching the “completion” stage of clearing all known contaminated areas, the issues of national ownership and of developing sustainable capacities to deal with residual contamination have become more central. This project examines the topic of national capacities and residual contamination through documenting processes, providing recommendations and offering targeted, country-specific guidance on the development of sustainable capacities to deal with residual contamination. Albania has been identified as a potentially relevant country from which to draw examples of best practices and lessons learned. These can be documented and, when suitably applied, assist other countries as they reach similar stages in the mine action programme life-cycle.

Objective

The purpose of the case study will be to gather information that will be used as part of wider research into key issues on the development of sustainable national capacities to deal with residual contamination. This research will then be used to provide the sector with clear guidance.

Outputs

A country case study report will be compiled and disseminated. The target audience will include national mine action authorities/mine action centres, national security services, relevant ministries, international and national organisations, relevant UN agencies and donors.

Key Issues to be explored in the country case study

1. Introduction and overview of the country context

- Brief introduction to the country
- Origin, nature and scope of the ERW contamination problem
- Current structure and status of EOD activities
 - Level of national ownership
 - Responsible actors (line ministries, national security services)
 - International and national actors involved in clearance activities
 - External support

2. History of the process of developing national capacities

Describe the process of developing the national capacity to address residual contamination

- Which stakeholders are/were involved (national and international)?
 - Ministries
 - Donors
 - National and international operators
 - Commercial companies
 - Relevant UN agencies

- Key milestones
- Is/was the process part of a broader Security Sector Reform (SSR) process?
- Do/did specific plans/strategies/policies guide the process?
- Do/did a capacity development plan/strategy guide the process?

3. Addressing residual contamination (for countries that have reached a “residual state”)

Explore the following key issues:

- Reporting channels (top-down or from community to security services)
- Responsible actors. If more than one, describe the nature of the partnership
- Nature of the residual contamination (items, depth, expected distribution)
- The process of moving from a proactive to a reactive/responsive phase
- The scope of the responsibilities of national actors. Do they include Armed Violence Reduction (AVR), Small Arms Light Weapons (SALW) and Physical Security and Stockpile Management (PSSM)?
- Key aspects of the national risk management approach (if relevant)
- Financial arrangements
- Sustainability aspects
- Are operations guided by any standards?
- Responsiveness
- Information management
 - a. Reporting structures and reporting flows (from whom to whom)
 - b. Information database (where it is stored)
 - c. Means of information sharing and dissemination (who has access to it)

4. Key findings: good practices, main challenges and lessons learnt

- Critically review the process of developing national capacities. Present and elaborate on key findings and good practices (success stories), and list challenges and issues that have been problematic (lessons learnt).

Timeframe

The specific timeframe will be determined in conjunction with the Albanian Mines and Munitions Coordination Office (AMMCO). The GICHD proposes to complete the study within Q2 2016.

Annex III: Translation of dataset provided by the State Police EOD Unit (provided by AMMCO)

Information: Meeting with Rory Logan on the work done by the State Police in relation to explosive munitions discovered to date, and the explosive munitions collected by other police units of the Ministry of the Interior and deposited in the depot of Unit No. 100.

Over the years, different munitions have been collected and were the responsibility of the police.

These munitions were found:

- during digging more than one meter below the surface for different reasons
- following erosion caused by streams or landslides

Ammunition stocks collected from other police units of the Ministry of the Interior and deposited in the depot of Unit No. 100.

In the State Police, the Special Anti-Explosives Unit is the only structure dealing with ammunition, explosives and mines. It confirms the types of munitions, their technical condition, the level of risk that they pose, and transports and disposes of them in the polygons assigned for this purpose.

Furthermore, the Special Anti-Explosives Unit is involved in additional services such as:

- Crime scene investigation where an explosion has occurred
- Deactivation of improvised explosive devices with mobile or remote controls as well as other deactivations
- Checking for explosives in buildings and facilities that are threatened by bombing
- Checking for explosives in buildings and facilities where different VIPs are present

Until 2015, the Unit faced a lot of work transporting and disposing of different munitions in the polygons assigned for this purpose.

The Special Anti-Explosives Unit is made up of engineering specialists but has very limited human and technical capacities.

Note:

Due to the number of different services mentioned above, the Unit was unable to be involved in the transportation and disposal of the munitions found in 2016, although reported cases of munition finds were frequent.

The two tables below clearly indicate the places where munitions have been found over the past eight years, with their types and amounts.

1. Munitions have been found across almost the entire country, as shown by the number of interventions carried out by the State Police Special Anti-Explosives Unit from 2008 to 2015, below:

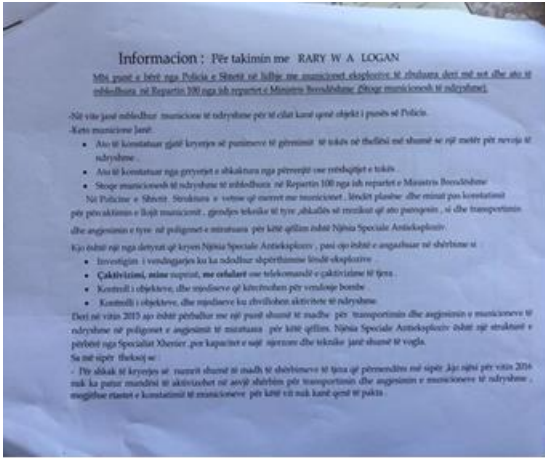
Year	Total no. of interventions	No. of interventions carried out from 2008 to 2015, by county											
		Tirana	Durres	Berat	Vlore	Elbasan	Diber	Lezhe	Korce	Fier	Gjirokas	Shkoder	Kukes
2008	65	14	10	3	12	7	2	5	2	6	1	3	1
2009	69	13	21	5	4	2	1	9	7	2	1	3	1
2010	29	3	6	0	2	3	0	3	6	0	0	1	0
2011	21	6	3	0	3	5	0	1	2	1	0	0	0
2012	32	16	3	0	2	2	3	3	1	2	0	0	0
2013	19	9	4	0	1	0	0	3		2	0	0	0
2014	28	9	1	0	1	4	0	4	1	2	3	1	2
2015	17	8	2	0	1	6	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

2. Types and amounts of munitions found, transported and destroyed on demolition ranges by the Special Anti-Explosives Unit from 2008 to 2015:

Year	Types and amounts of munitions found, transported and destroyed by the Special Anti-Explosives Unit from 2008 to 2015						
	Hand Grenades (pcs)	RPGs (pcs)	Projectiles (pcs)	Different munitions stockpiled in Unit 100's depot	Aircraft bombs (pcs)	Torpedoes (pcs)	AT Mines (pcs)
2008	42	122	207	1.97	3	1	1

2009	60	23	267	24.4	1	0	0
2010	48	0	279	15.1	5	0	0
2011	10	0	463	0.7	0	0	0
2012	7	5	346	1.82	2	0	5
2013	3	29	24	0	0	0	0
2014	18	8	188	0	2	0	0
2015	2	0	102	0.51	1	0	0
Total	190	187	1894	44.5	14	1	6

Annex IV: Actual dataset provided by the State Police EOD Unit



1. Harta e gjërës së municioneve ka qenë shtet e zgjeruar përfaqësi në të gjithë territorin e vendit dhe Njësia e shërbimeve të kryera nga Njësia Speciale Antieksplozivë e Policia të Shtetit në Drejtorit e Qendrës, nga vitin 2008 deri në vitin 2015 është si në tabelën e mëposhtme:

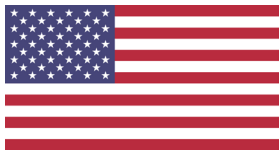
Vitet	Numri i Shërbimeve Kryesore	Numri i Shërbimeve të kryera nga vitin 2008 deri në vitin 2015 sipas Qendrës										SHUMË		
		Tiranë	Durrës	Berat	Vlorë	Dibër	Dukagjin	Lezhë	Korçë	Fier	Çirçan		Shkollë	Kodrin
2008	65	14	10	3	12	7	2	5	2	6	1	3	1	65
2009	69	13	21	5	4	2	1	9	7	2	1	5	1	69
2010	29	3	6	-	2	3	-	3	6	-	-	1	-	29
2011	21	6	3	-	3	5	-	1	2	1	-	-	-	21
2012	32	16	3	-	2	2	3	5	1	2	-	-	-	32
2013	19	9	4	-	1	-	-	3	2	-	-	-	-	19
2014	28	9	1	-	1	4	-	4	1	2	3	1	2	28
2015	17	8	2	-	1	6	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	17
														SHUMË 280

2. Lloji dhe sasia e municioneve të konstatuara, transportuar dhe angazhimin të përgjithshëm e angazhimin municioneve nga Njësia Speciale Antieksplozivë e Policia të Shtetit nga vitin 2008 deri në vitin 2015

Vitet	Lloji dhe sasia e Municioneve të konstatuara nga vitin 2008 deri në vitin 2015, të transportuar e angazhimin nga Njësia Speciale Antieksplozivë e Policia të Shtetit	Grumbullimi (Krye)	CHERRY (Krye)	Prushit Armatë (Krye)	Municioneve të shprehura në afër dhe afër të Raportit 100 (Krye)	Municioneve të shprehura në afër dhe afër të Raportit 100 (Krye)	Municioneve të shprehura në afër dhe afër të Raportit 100 (Krye)	Municioneve të shprehura në afër dhe afër të Raportit 100 (Krye)
2008	42	122	207	197	1	1	1	1
2009	80	25	267	244	1	-	-	-
2010	48	-	279	131	5	-	-	-
2011	10	-	403	67	-	-	-	-
2012	7	3	346	182	2	-	3	-
2013	5	29	24	-	-	-	-	-
2014	18	8	188	-	2	-	-	-
2015	2	-	102	631	1	-	-	-
SHUMË	190	187	1894	445	14	1	4	4

Tabela A-1

Supported with the kind contribution of the United States of America



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