

Evaluation of the Albanian Mine Action Programme

Submitted by the
**Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining
(GICHD)**

**Geneva
August 2007**

Evaluation of the Albanian Mine Action Programme

Table of Contents

| | |
|--|-----|
| Preface | i |
| Abbreviations | iii |
| Executive Summary | v |
| Albania’s Mine Action Programme | vi |
| Conclusions and Principal Recommendations | vii |
| 1. Evaluation objectives | 1 |
| 1.2 Roles and responsibilities in the evaluation process | 1 |
| 1.3 Key Deliverables | 2 |
| 1.4 Methodology | 2 |
| 2. Background..... | 5 |
| 3. Main Findings..... | 9 |
| 3.1 Funding and Commitment: Solid and Steady | 9 |
| 3.2 Clearance: Steady Progress..... | 10 |
| 3.2.1 National clearance capacity for 2008-2009..... | 14 |
| 3.2.2 National mine action standards..... | 14 |
| 3.3 Victim Assistance: Meeting Survivors’ Needs..... | 16 |
| 3.3.1 National Strategy for People with Disabilities..... | 18 |
| 3.3.2 Victim Statistics..... | 18 |
| 3.4 Mine Risk Education: Working Towards Complete Coverage | 19 |
| 3.5 Actively Linking Mine Action and Development | 21 |
| 3.5.1 Post clearance benefits..... | 24 |
| 3.6 Albanian Mine Action Committee (AMAC)..... | 25 |
| 3.7 Albania Mine Action Executive (AMAE)..... | 25 |
| 3.7.1 Coordination | 25 |
| 3.7.2 Accreditation | 26 |
| 3.7.3 Task Management | 26 |
| 3.7.4 Quality Management..... | 26 |
| 3.7.5 Handover Procedures | 27 |
| 3.7.6 Information Management..... | 28 |
| 3.7.7 Community Liaison | 29 |
| 3.7.8 Resource Mobilisation..... | 30 |
| 3.7.9 Institutional Capacity..... | 30 |
| 3.8 Capacity Building and Ownership..... | 31 |
| 3.8.1 Ownership..... | 32 |
| 3.8.2 Capacity Building | 33 |
| 3.9 Explosive Ordnance Disposal and residual landmines after 2009..... | 35 |
| 3.10 Closing the mine action program | 36 |
| 4. Conclusions | 37 |
| 4.1 Scenarios | 37 |
| 4.1.1 Scenario A – Completing Unfinished Business | 37 |
| 4.1.2 Scenario B – Switching Gears | 38 |
| 5. Recommendations | 41 |
| General | 41 |
| To AMAE | 41 |
| To AMAE and VMA..... | 42 |
| To UNDP Albania | 42 |
| To the Ministry of Health..... | 42 |
| To the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs | 43 |

| | |
|---|----|
| To the Ministry of Education and UNICEF | 43 |
| 6. Lessons Learned | 45 |
| 6.1 General..... | 45 |
| 6.2 Emergency Situation | 46 |
| 6.3 Closing the mine action program..... | 46 |
| Annex 1: Interviews Conducted | a |
| Annex 2: Documents Consulted..... | c |
| Annex 3: Timeline of Mine Action Programme in Albania | g |
| Annex 4: List of 39 villages in Kukës Region, by district | i |
| Annex 5: Donors since 1999 to the Albania's Mine Action Programme | k |

List of Tables

| | |
|---|----|
| Table 1 – Evaluation Stages and Milestones | 2 |
| Table 2 – Mine Action Strategy 2005-2009 | 6 |
| Table 3 – Land Released by Survey & Manual Clearance: 1999-2007 (in millions of m ²) | 10 |
| Table 4 – Percentage of area released by survey & by manual clearance | 11 |
| Table 5 – Projections for 2007-2009 | 12 |
| Table 6 – What remains to be done, by district..... | 12 |
| Table 7 – Numbers of landmine victims since 1999..... | 18 |
| Table 8 – Numbers of victims, by sex | 19 |
| Table 9 – Victims of mine accidents, by age..... | 19 |
| Table 10 – MRE activities in Kukës Region from 2001 to 2006 | 20 |
| Table 11 – Scenario 1: Pros and Cons | 38 |
| Table 12 – Scenario 2: Pros and Cons | 39 |

List of Figures

| | |
|--|----|
| Figure 1 – Map of Albania..... | 3 |
| Figure 2 – Impacted Areas in Albania | 5 |
| Figure 3 – Risk Reduction over Time..... | 10 |

List of Textboxes

| | |
|---|----|
| Textbox 1 – Socio-economic Indicators in Kukës Region | 7 |
| Textbox 2 – Survey and Clearance Profile..... | 13 |
| Textbox 3 – Revolving Loan Fund | 17 |
| Textbox 4 – Data about Albania in the MRE curriculum..... | 20 |
| Textbox 5 – Setting clearance priorities in Kukës | 23 |
| Textbox 6 – Tasking..... | 26 |

Preface

The Evaluation Team wishes to thank the many people who shared their time and views with us, helping to make the mission to Albania a success and leading directly to many of the findings contained this report.

We would like to note the roles played by Arben Braha, Stefano Calabretta and Jonuz Kola and the AMAE staff who prepared the ground for the mission and organized and facilitated the meetings and field visit to the Kukes Region.

Special thanks go to Beqir Basha for organizing, advising and translating when needed.

The conclusions and recommendations contained in this report represent the views of the Evaluation Team. UNDP, AMAE, DCA and VMA are not responsible for the content of this report or bound by its recommendations.

| | |
|-----------------|--|
| Mike Kendellen, | Survey Action Center, Director for Survey & Evaluation Team Leader |
| Sharmala Naidoo | GICHD, Linking Mine Action and Development Research Officer & Evaluation Team Member |
| Faiz Paktian | GICHD, Head of Standards and Stockpiles Destruction & Evaluation Team Member |

Abbreviations

| | |
|-------|--|
| AAF | Albanian Armed Forces |
| ABD | Area Based Development |
| AMAE | Albanian Mine Action Executive |
| AMAC | Albanian Mine Action Committee |
| AMAP | Albanian Mine Action Programme |
| AMCO | Albanian Mine Clearance Organization |
| AP | Anti-Personnel Mine |
| ARC | Albanian Red Cross |
| AT | Anti Tank Mine |
| AXO | Abandoned Explosive Ordnance |
| BAC | Battle Area Clearance |
| BCPR | Bureau for Crisis Prevention and Recovery |
| CBR | Community Based Network |
| CCW | (Convention on) Certain Conventional Weapons (of War) |
| CLO | Community Liaison Officer |
| CTA | Chief Technical Advisor |
| DCA | DanChurch Aid |
| DEX | Direct Execution |
| DfID | Department for International Development |
| DoS | U.S. Department of State |
| EC | European Commission |
| EOD | Explosive Ordnance Disposal |
| ERW | Explosive Remnants of War |
| EU | European Union |
| FSD | Swiss Foundation for Mine action |
| FYR | Former Yugoslavian Republic |
| GICHD | Geneva International Center for Humanitarian Demining |
| GIS | Geographic Information Systems |
| HI | Handicap International |
| ICRC | International Committee of Red Cross |
| IMAS | International Mine Action Standards |
| IMSMA | Information Management System for Mine Action |
| IS | Impact Survey |
| ITF | International Trust Fund |
| KLA | Kosovo Liberation Army |
| KRDI | Kukës Regional Development Initiative |
| KRO | Kukes Regional Office |
| LGP | Local Governance Programme |
| MA | Mine Action |
| MAC | Mine Action Centre |
| MDDT | Mine Detection Dogs Team |
| MDG | Millennium Development Goal |
| MoD | Ministry of Defence |
| MoLSA | Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs |
| MoU | Memorandum of Understanding |
| MRE | Mine Risk Education |
| NATO | North Atlantic Treaty Organization |
| NCC | National Clearance Capacity |
| NGO | Non-governmental organization |
| NDC | National Demilitarisation Centre |
| NEX | National Execution |

Evaluation of the Albanian Mine Action Programme

| | |
|---------|---|
| NOPC | National Orthotic Prosthetic Centre |
| N1KD | Night of a Thousand Dinners |
| NMAP | National Mine Action Plan |
| NMAS | National Mine Action Standards |
| NOPC | National Orthotic Prosthetic Centre |
| OSCE | Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe |
| PIU | Project Implementation Unit |
| PPE | Personal Protective Equipment |
| QA | Quality Assurance |
| QC | Quality Control |
| QM | Quality Management |
| RDS | Regional Development Strategy |
| SEEMACC | South East Europe Mine Action Coordination Council |
| SOP | Standard Operating Procedures |
| TS | Technical Survey |
| TSS | Technical Safety Standards |
| UNDP | United Nations Development Programme |
| UNICEF | United Nations Children's Fund |
| UNMAS | United Nations Mine Action Service |
| US | United States of America |
| USD | United States Dollars |
| UXO | Unexploded Ordnance |
| VA | Victim Assistance |
| VMA | Victims of Mines Association |

Executive Summary

The landmine problem in Albania dates from the Kosovo conflict in 1998-99 when the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (now Serbia) military forces laid mines on both sides of the border of Albania and Kosovo. Unexploded ordnance from cluster munitions used by the Serbian army and NATO strikes from April-June 1999 has also contributed to the ERW problem in Albania.

Landmines are only found in the three districts of Kukës, Has and Tropojë in northeast Albania. It is also only one part of the overall socio-economic situation in the Kukës region. Prior to the Kosovo conflict, Kukës was already the poorest and most marginalized region in Albania. Landmines only exacerbated the problem in the border areas with Kosovo, Macedonia and Montenegro. The development of the Kukës region, including improving its poor roads and infrastructure, present formidable challenges even without the presence of landmines. Since 1990 the region has suffered from migration to either the urban areas of Albania or parts beyond the borders to Europe and elsewhere. The population today continues to decline. A recent United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) study found that the population in Kukës has declined to approximately 100,000 people; some development specialists estimate the population is even less. Assuming the migrants are largely adult males of working age, this continuing exodus makes developing the region that much more challenging and problematic.

Of the approximately 80-90,000 people who live in the area, 75% make a living from subsistence agriculture on small plots of land.

The state of rural health care in Albania is very poor. An estimated 70% of the population lacks access to health services and the few patients and staff seen at the Kukës Regional Hospital illustrates the situation. It will take years to improve the health sector in Kukës region as the problems associated with it derive from poverty, lack of training, and a shortage of doctors and nurses, equipment and medicine.

Amid this impoverished area are 39 mine impacted villages in the three districts of Kukës, Tropojë and Has with a combined population of 25,000. The landmine and UXO contaminated area stretches 120 km from the border with Montenegro in the north to the Federal Republic of Macedonia in the south, with the majority of the contamination along the border with Kosovo. Most of the minefields are within 300-500 meters of the border. Since 1999, accidents from landmines resulted in 34 deaths and 238 injured, although more than 80% of the casualties occurred in 1999-2000. There have been no landmine accidents since 2005. On a national scale, 39 of the approximately 2,936 villages in Albania are impacted by landmines, for a prevalence rate of 1.3%. In other mine affected countries, the prevalence rate is close to 10%. The impact from landmines in the border area with Kosovo, however, has been more intense than the low prevalence rate might indicate. Nevertheless, with steady annual progress in clearing the area of landmines and unexploded ordnance, just 15 villages remain impacted by landmines and the mine impacted land associated with these villages measures slightly more than two square kilometres as of 31 December 2006. The landmine problem in Albania is close to being solved.

Albania's Mine Action Programme

In response to the presence of landmines during the Kosovo Crisis, the Albanian government with the assistance of the international donor community and under the lead of the Ministry of Defence, Albania established a mine action programme in 1999 that included the inter-ministerial Albanian Mine Action Committee (AMAC) and the Albanian Mine Action Executive (AMAE). In 2002 UNDP began the Capacity Building Project with aim to establish an autonomous capacity to coordinate and monitor mine action activities in accordance with international standards and with funding from several donors. From 2002-2006 Albania made steady progress towards becoming a mine-free country. The National Mine Action Strategy, as revised in August 2006, established the mission, vision and the strategic objectives of the Albania Mine Action Programme through August 2010. The overall mission of the programme is the development and the implementation of a sustainable mine action programme in order to eliminate all mines and unexploded ordnance through clearance of all the areas in northeast Albania by 2010. With the present capacity of six national teams working in the field with Danish Church Aid available to clear the remaining landmines, the mission should achieve its goals on schedule.

A well detailed "National Mine Action Plan for Completion" for the period 2007-2010, was prepared in 2006 within the framework of the UNDP "Completion Initiative." The government of Albania has presented it in various international Mine Action conferences and distributed it to various donors for possible funding.

The programme has developed into one that is comprehensive, well coordinated and which has been well received by all key stakeholders. Donors interviewed by the Evaluation Team unanimously expressed that their funds were used efficiently and effectively. This should be recognized as a worthy achievement considering the level of complexity of managing a mine action programme and the remoteness and poor infrastructure of the Kukes region, where the landmines are located. Thus far, the Albania Mine Action Programme has made steady progress by clearing 87% of the mined area, providing assistance to those injured by the mines and educating the people in Kukes about the risks involved with landmines and other remnants of war.

The programme has many achievements worth highlighting:

- There have been no victims from landmines in Albania since 2005.
- Thus far, 87% of estimated mined land has been released to the villages in Kukes for use leaving only 2.1 km² left to clear as of January 2007, which indicates Albania is on track towards meeting its obligations as per Article 5 of the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Treaty by August 2010.
- All survivors have received medical assistance and support, and the victim assistance programme has benefited the wider community of people with disabilities.
- The MRE component of the programme has reached over 15,000 people in all 39 mine-affected villages.
- The mine action programme is closely aligned with regional development priorities and programming.
- Effective coordination of the programme by Albania Mine Action Executive (AMAE), including engagement and support from a wide range of key stakeholders, i.e. national and local government officials, donors, national and international NGOs, and local communities.

- The programme has benefited from strong working relationships with highly effective and dedicated implementing partners.
- The international community has provided consistent funding required meeting the needs of the programme since its establishment in 1999.

The Ministry of Defence, in its role as chair of Albania Mine Action Committee (AMAC), has also played a critical part in demonstrating government engagement of the problem of landmine contamination.

The only shortcoming of the programme has been its inability to achieve national ownership as originally envisioned in 2002 when the capacity building project began. While the reasons for this are not entirely clear to the evaluation team,¹ they are more than offset by the overwhelming success of the programme in reducing the threat of injury and death to close to zero. Even so, the mine action programme in Albania raises issues for UNDP and the donors on the importance of reaching a better understanding and agreement on national ownership and capacity building so this can be applied in other mine action programmes.

The directors of AMAE and Victims of Mines Association (VMA) deserve recognition for their leadership and commitment to ensuring that Albania moves forward to becoming mine free and that mine survivors in Kukes receive adequate support and assistance, and for ensuring that communities in the region are well informed about the risks of landmines.

Conclusions and Principal Recommendations

The mine action programme in Albania has been a success and is very close to achieving all of its goals, including making Albania mine free. However, some unfinished business remains and some areas need adjustments in order to ensure continued donor support to complete the program.

By all estimates and projections, while assuming that the necessary funding is provided, the remaining minefields in the Kukes region should be cleared by the end of 2009. This should be the focus of AMAE, UNDP, the International Trust Fund (ITF), the EC and other donors and the government of Albania for the next two and a half years. However, there are two goals in the UNDP Capacity Building Programme that the Evaluation Team considers no longer feasible. One is trying to incorporate AMAE into the Ministry of Defence structure in order for UNDP to decrease its role and for the government to assume more financial responsibility in the remaining three years of the mine action programme. Similarly, the goal in making the mine action programme solely managed by national groups through the turning the mine clearance teams in Kukes into a national NGO that could operate with little or no international oversight is no longer practical or useful.

While these two goals are laudable and should be part of any development programme, it is, in the view of the Evaluation Team, too late to implement these plans. With less than two square kilometres of mined land remaining to clear and less than three years to go, the need to pass legislation, AMAE re-locating to the Ministry of Defence and six demining teams turning themselves into a functioning national NGO will become a major distraction in finishing the job. We recommend all on-going

¹ There have been changes in government and of key personnel in the Ministry of Defence since the AMAC agreed to the capacity building project, and the Evaluation Team was not able to meet the previous incumbents.

efforts in this direction be terminated and that all future planning focus on clearing the last landmine, ensuring the sustainability of health structures to provide the long term assistance that all mine survivors with serious injuries require and ensure the sustainability of the education programmes developed about landmines. If these three goals are achieved by the end of 2009, the government of Albania, AMAE, all of the organizations involved and the international community can be proud that they contributed to an extremely successful mine action programme and in the end they can declare Albania mine free.

1. Evaluation objectives

The main objectives of the evaluation of the Albanian Mine Action Programme (AMAP) and the Albanian Mine Action Executive (AMAE) were to:

- Assess the relevance, efficiency, effectiveness and impact of the mine action programme in Albania and draw lessons for future emergency operations
- Analyse the remaining tasks required
- Determine the links and relationships with Albania's development framework, and specifically with the Regional Development Strategy for the Kukës Province and the Kukës Regional Development Initiative
- Assess the transitional process of the AMAP to full national ownership, including the establishment of due legislative framework
- Provide recommendations for sustainable national interventions at the planning and operational levels
- Assess the present capacity of the AMAE and the extent to which the UNDP Capacity Building Project has strengthened its capacity to autonomously coordinate and monitor the Mine Action Programme
- Assess the achievements of AMAE, including the degree to which objectives have been met, its overall impact on mine-affected communities and its overall effectiveness as a coordination/oversight body
- Determine the views of mine action donors in Albania with regards to the AMAE's use of resources
- Analyse the efficiency of the AMAE's project management arrangements
- Assess the efficiency and validity of key risk management activities/techniques utilised within the mine action programme in Albania

The evaluation is to generate recommendations for the Government of Albania, AMAC and AMAE to further develop the national mine action structure and programme in order to develop a mine action system which ensures meaningful consultation across concerned ministries and with key stakeholders.

1.2 Roles and responsibilities in the evaluation process

The GICHD Evaluation Team was responsible for planning the work, conducting a desk review, fieldwork, interviews and other data collection activities, data analysis, reporting on the results obtained from the evaluation, making recommendations for the future mine action programme and presenting a forecast for future resource availability based on national and international contributions.

1.3 Key Deliverables

The principal deliverables from the assignment were:

- A detailed evaluation work plan (shared and agreed with the UNDP Country Office, the AMAC Chairman and the AMAE) by 13 April 2007
- A draft evaluation report of findings by 1 June 2007
- The final evaluation report of findings, conclusions and recommendations, incorporating as appropriate the comments and critiques from the UNDP Country Office, the AMAC Chairman and AMAE within one week of receipt of the consolidated comments.

1.4 Methodology

The general approach was for a multi-staged process, facilitating the emergence of a common understanding between the Evaluation Team and AMAC, AMAE and UNDP personnel concerning the priority evaluation issues as well as how best to obtain the evidence required to derive conclusions relating to those issues.

The evaluation had four stages with each stage having a well-defined completion milestone as outlined below:

Table 1 – Evaluation Stages and Milestones

| Stage | Locations | Completion milestone |
|--|-----------------------|--|
| Preliminary research and work planning | Geneva, Tirana | UNDP signoff of detailed work plan |
| Key informant interviews | Tirana, Kukes and Has | Debriefing of UNDP, AMAC and AMAE personnel |
| Field mission(s) | Kukes and Has | |
| Analysis and reporting | Geneva, Tirana | UNDP, AMAC and AMAE acceptance of final report |

Figure 1 – Map of Albania



Evaluation of the Albanian Mine Action Programme

2. Background

The landmine problem in Albania originates with the Kosovo conflict in 1998-99 when the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (now Serbia) military forces laid mines on both sides of the border of Albania and Kosovo to prevent the Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA) from effectively using Albania as a base of operations. Unexploded ordnance from KB-1 cluster munitions used by the Serbian army and NATO strikes from April-June 1999 has also contributed to the ERW problem in Albania.

Post conflict surveys in 1999 conducted by the Albanian Armed Forces and Care International determined that 39 villages with a combined population of 25,000 were impacted by landmines with an estimated area of 15.25km². The landmine and UXO contamination spans 120 kilometres from the border with Montenegro in the north to the Federal Republic of Macedonia in the south with the majority of the contamination along the border with Kosovo and resulted in 34 deaths and 238 injured. The mine impacted area encompasses the Kukes region which includes the three districts of Kukes, Tropoje and Has. Most of the minefields are within 300-500 meters of the border. The map below indicates the mine impacted districts in northeast Albania.

Figure 2 – Impacted Areas in Albania



By 31 December 2006, through community assessment surveys, technical surveys and clearance activities of the contaminated area, more than 13km² of land had been released to the community leaving 2.018km² more to be cleared and released. Fifty percent of this land is contaminated by cluster munitions and is considered as Battle Area Clearance (BAC) tasks. The other 50 percent are minefields.

Evaluation of the Albanian Mine Action Programme

Mine action in Albania began in September 1999 with the formation of the Albania Mine Action Committee (AMAC), a policy and oversight body, and the Albania Mine Action Executive (AMAE), a coordination body. These structures have remained in place. AMAC, chaired by the Deputy Minister of Defence, provides leadership and direction to mine action and approves strategic plans and projects.

The box below outlines the mine action strategy for 2005-2009, which focuses on the transition from international support to national support, with AMAE being incorporated into the national structure and the mine clearance teams under DanChurch Aid (DCA) being established as a national clearance NGO. The transition strategy in regard to ownership and national capacity is the major focus of this evaluation report.

Table 2 – Mine Action Strategy 2005-2009

| | | 2005/2006 | 2007/2009 |
|---|-----------------------------|---|--|
| 1 | Clearance | Clearing of high and medium priority areas through international demining organization | Clearing of medium and low priorities areas through a national NGO (AMCO) |
| 2 | MRE | Maintain due level of awareness for “Zero victims”, through awareness campaigns | Adoption of MRE Curriculum for schools |
| 3 | Victim Assistance | Support to the ongoing medical care, physical rehabilitation and socio-economic reintegration of 236 mine/UXO victims | Continued assistance and reintegration through national capacity and development opportunities |
| 4 | Coordination and monitoring | AMAE continues to work with international support | AMAE integrated into the national government structure |

Prior to the Kosovo conflict, Kukës was Albania’s poorest and most marginalized region. The situation has not changed – if anything it has worsened. The region suffered from fifty years of severe isolation prior to 1990 and then from a massive population exodus in the early 1990s after the collapse of the communist government. The mountainous terrain, poor roads and infrastructure and cold winters exacerbate the poor living conditions and present major challenges to developing the region. The population continues to decline as job opportunities are few and people migrate to Tirana and elsewhere outside of the region. According to 2003 UNDP population estimates, of the approximately 100,000 people who live in the area, 75 percent make a living from subsistence agriculture on an average of 1.7 hectares per household.

The state of rural health care in Albania is very poor. An estimated 70 percent of the population lacks access to health services and the few patients and staff seen at the Kukës Regional Hospital illustrates the situation. It will take many years to improve the quality of and access to health care, as the problem derives primarily from poverty and lack of training, doctors and nurses, equipment and medicine.

Textbox 1 – Socio-economic Indicators in Kukës Region

- Average GDP per capita in the region is USD\$1,564, one third the Albanian national average of USD\$4,830
- Unemployment rate across the region is just under 30%, compared to a national average of 14.6% recorded in 2001
- 56% of the Kukës population receives social aid, compared with a national average of 22%
- Infant and maternal mortality rates in the region are 4-5 times higher than the average for the European Union
- Less than 32% of dwellings in Kukës region have internal water access
- Only 27% of students in rural areas attend secondary school (the majority of females not at all)

Sources: INSTAT 2001, Department of Social Welfare – Kukës 2001, Ministry of Health 2002, District Level Statistics

Kukës' already poor infrastructure was severely affected by the Kosovo conflict and the resulting landmine and UXO contamination, particularly in terms of the quality of roads, irrigation channels, and agricultural and grazing land. Mines also prevented access to border control points, and patrolling the Kosovo/Albania border was extremely difficult for border control police. For example, in 1999, 13 casualties resulted among the border police force.

Evaluation of the Albanian Mine Action Programme

3. Main Findings

The following sections outline the main findings of the Evaluation Team with regards to the Albanian Mine Action Programme and Albanian Mine Action Executive.

3.1 Funding and Commitment: Solid and Steady

The success of the Albanian mine action program can be attributed to a collaborative effort in financial, technical and administrative support from major donors such as the European Commission and the US Department of State, together with UNDP and the International Trust Fund, international and national NGOs and the Albanian Mine Action Executive (AMAE) since the beginning of the program in 1999.

The International Trust Fund for Demining and Mine Victims Assistance (ITF) is a humanitarian, non-profit organization devoted to eradication of the landmines from the ground in the region of South-Eastern Europe and the world. The ITF was established by the government of Slovenia in March 1998 to provide assistance to Bosnia and Herzegovina in solving its landmine problem and, subsequently, expanded to raise funds for demining and mine victim assistance in the region of South Eastern Europe (SEE). Currently, the ITF supports projects in Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Macedonia, and the Republic of Serbia. In Albania, the ITF has been a key player in funding mine action projects, particularly victim assistance and operational funds for AMAE since 2000 and have contributed \$17 million to the programme. The ITF also plays a consultancy role in assisting in the formulation of annual work plans and mine action strategies.

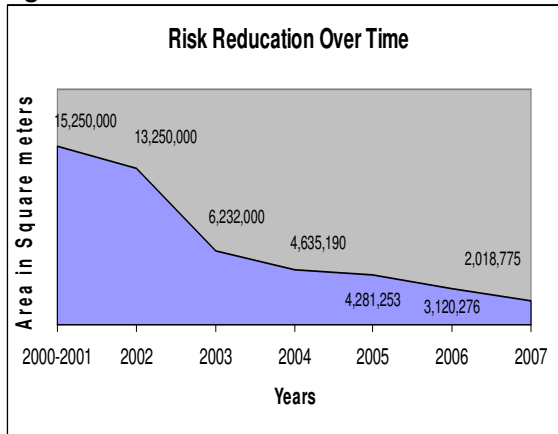
The EC and the US Department of State Weapons Removal and Abatement office, through ITF, have been the major donors to the Albanian Mine Action Programme. This support has included funding for coordination and monitoring, mine clearance, mine risk education and victim assistance. The joint effort has resulted in adequate funding for projects in clearance, survey, victim assistance and mine risk education and the building of capacity for AMAE. The victim assistance and MRE programmes have achieved maximum coverage as every family or individual affected by landmine injury and every mine affected community in the Kukës region has been assisted. While it is difficult to make a direct connection between MRE and a reduction in accidents, it is reasonable to conclude that in Albania the extensive nature of the MRE program has reduced accidents and casualties. The almost 100 percent achievement in targeting landmine survivors and their families and the steady annual reduction in the amount of mine contaminated land are laudable achievements and indicators of money well spent. AMAE has developed into a well-respected and competent coordination unit that has become the face of mine action in Albania.

The UNDP Mine Action Programme is one of direct execution (DEX) led by a chief technical advisor and supported by the UNDP country office and contributes to the goal of an Albania free from mines by August 2010. The inter-ministerial Albanian Mine Action Committee is the policy body chaired by the Deputy Minister of Defence and AMAE functions under the DEX project as the coordinating body for mine action. The role and success of AMAE is discussed further below in this report.

3.2 Clearance: Steady Progress

Mine/ERW clearance operations in Albania are confined to 39 communities in the three districts of Kukës, Has and Tropojë in the Kukës region. Almost all of the mine contaminated areas are located along the border with Kosovo, and access to these areas is difficult due to poor roads and mountainous terrain. Since the beginning of the mine action program in 1999 there has been steady progress in clearing the contaminated areas.

Figure 3 – Risk Reduction over Time



As of January 2007, a total of 2,018,775 square metres (m²) of contaminated area remains, of which 685,322 m² is identified as former battle field (cluster munitions strike locations) and 1,375,600 m² is mine/ERW suspected area.

Perhaps the most striking characteristic of mine action in Albania is the strong community based approach it has in mitigating the risk of landmines and ERW. This has been fundamental to the

success of Albania’s mine action programme. Integrated mine action operations reduced the number of landmine/ERW accidents from 191 in 1999 to zero since 2005.

As the data in the table above shows, one of the characteristics of the clearance program in Albania has been the amount of land cleared by survey. In 2000-2003, 10 km² was released just through surveys, which reduced the area to be cleared by two-thirds. Further surveying from 2004-2006 released an additional 2 km², providing a total of 12 km² released by survey rather than manual clearance.

Table 3 – Land Released by Survey & Manual Clearance: 1999-2007 (in millions of m²)

| | 1999 2000-2001 | 2002 | 2003 | 2004 | 2005 | 2006 | Planned 2007 |
|---|-------------------|---------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|-----------------|
| Balance of contaminated area start | 15.250 | 13.250 | 6.232 | 4.635 | 4.281 | 3.120 | 2.061 |
| Area Released by survey | 1.575 | 6.788 | 1.637 | 0.314 | 0.860 | 0.906 | 0.0 |
| Area Released by clearance | 0.425 | 0.230 | 0.310 | 0.183 | 0.520 | 0.475 | 0.0 |
| Total Area Released | 2.000 | 7.018 | 1.947 | 0.496 | 1.380 | 1.381 | 0.700 |
| Area Added by Clearance | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.350 | 0.142 | 0.219 | 0.322 | 0.0 |
| Balance at end of year | 13.250 | 6.232 | 4.635 | 4.281 | 3.120 | 2.061 | 1.361 |

Evaluation of the Albanian Mine Action Programme

At the end of 2006, 85% of the original estimated area had been cleared by survey. In 2000-2003, 10,000,000 m² of contaminated land was released through local impact and technical surveys, largely conducted by DCA but also by RONCO, HELP and FSD. Since 2004, DCA has released an additional 2,079,568 m² through surveys. AMAE reports also indicate that 819,409 m² of the amount released by DCA was released through methods called “Surveyed Out” and “Cancelled.”

Overall, the total amount of area released through survey is notable. The clearance records in Albania provide a pool of information and documentation for further in-depth analysis, understanding and discussion to fully comprehend its wider implications and lessons learned for the on-going discussions occurring in mine action on risk management.

The demining season in Albania is from April through November and consists of 168 days per annum. The teams work for three consecutive weeks, followed by one week off. The deminers are sent on unpaid leave during the winter season. The current clearance target for one demining team is 150 m² per day. Based on 168 working days over an 8-month period, each team is projected to clear 25,200 m² for the clearing season or 151,200 m² for six teams. If it is projected that 700,000 m² of land is to be released in 2007, the six clearance teams will clear approximately 20% and the remainder will be released by survey.

Table 4 – Percentage of area released by survey & by manual clearance

| | 2000-2003 | | 2004-2006 | | Total Area | Total % |
|----------------------------|-------------------|-------------|------------------|-------------|-------------------|-------------|
| | area | % | area | % | | |
| Area Released by survey | 10,000,000 | 91% | 2,079,568 | 64% | 12,079,568 | 85% |
| Area Released by clearance | 965,000 | 9% | 1,177,865 | 36% | 2,142,865 | 15% |
| Total Area Released | 10,965,000 | 100% | 3,257,433 | 100% | 14,222,433 | 100% |

Based on information from the AMAE Operations 2006 report, of the 36 tasks cleared in 2006, 9 appear to have had no mine/ERW. This indicates that many non-mined areas are being surveyed and cleared. Therefore, it is recommended that clearance resources are tasked and deployed after detailed consultation and information gathering with the affected community. The DCA and the AMAE Operations Officers and Quality Monitors should spend more time in the mine affected communities to reduce the possibility of the deployment of mine clearance resources to non-mined areas in the future. This can be greatly reduced through greater and more effective communication and information gathering prior to mine clearance operations.

Proposals for clearance in Albania are largely based on the amount of contaminated area to clear over the length of the contract, and the number of teams needed to achieve the target. With only six clearance teams available for the next three years, it is critical that all parties agree on the amount of land to clear and how this will be accomplished. As mentioned above proposals submitted to donors in 2006 and for the 2007 Mine Action Portfolio are inconsistent in reporting how much area remains and what will be cleared in each year. Although the differences are small, with so little land remaining to be cleared with six clearance teams, AMAE and DCA should review plans and the progress on a quarterly basis to ensure there are sufficient resources to finish the job by the end of 2009.

Evaluation of the Albanian Mine Action Programme

Table 3 above provides revised figures on the mine contaminated area released as of 31 December 2006 and what remains to be done. The key figure for the next three years is the amount of additional area that is cleared. Since 2003, 991,000 m² of additional land has been cleared. In most mine action programs this is a trivial amount, particularly when it is the cumulative amount over a four-year period. In Albania however, it could possibly threaten the success of the Completion Initiative. In 2006 the records show that 20% more land was cleared than planned. As Table 5 shows, if this continues in 2007-09, when the plan is to release 700,000 m² per year, it could result in slightly more than 400,000 m² at the end of 2009.

Table 5 – Projections for 2007-2009

| | 2006 | % | Planned 2007 | Planned 2008 | Planned 2009 |
|--|------------------|-------------|------------------|------------------|-----------------|
| Balance of contaminated area at beginning of year | 3,120,276 | 100% | 2,018,775 | 1,458,775 | 898,775 |
| Area Released by survey | 905,812 | 29% | 459,161 | 459,161 | 405,882 |
| Area Released by clearance | 475,116 | 15% | 240,839 | 240,839 | 212,893 |
| Total Area Released | 1,380,928 | 44% | 700,000 | 700,000 | 618,775 |
| Area Added by Actual Clearance | 321,574 | 10% | 140,000 | 140,000 | 123,755 |
| Balance at end of year | 2,060,922 | 66% | 1,458,775 | 898,775 | 403,775 |

Two other factors have to be considered in the planning for 2007-2009. The information in Table 6 below was provided to the Evaluation Team. It shows that 2,060,922 m² remain to be cleared in the three districts, of which 75 percent is in Tropoje.

Table 6 – What remains to be done, by district

| District | Population | m ² of mine contaminated land remaining | m ² of BAC contaminated land remaining | m ² of contaminated mine/BAC land remaining | SHA |
|----------------|----------------|--|---|--|-----------|
| Tropoje | 27,947 | 936,600 | 567,500 | 1,504,100 | 35 |
| Has | 19,660 | 233,500 | 47,822 | 281,322 | 11 |
| Kukes | 63,786 | 265,500 | 10,000 | 275,500 | 10 |
| TOTAL | 111,393 | 1,435,600 | 625,322 | 2,060,922 | 56 |

Seventy-three percent of the remaining contaminated area is in Tropoje district in the far northeast. The terrain in Tropoje is more difficult there and security can be problematic in this isolated area. The rate of clearance could be less than it has been in Has and Kukes, if only 20 percent will be cleared based on the daily targets of each demining team and the remainder of the land released by survey. In addition, AMAE continues to deal with the discontent from the deminers who were laid off at the end of 2006. The most vocal protestors have been from Tropoje and as the clearance teams move north, it remains to be seen if further demonstrations will affect clearance operations.

Textbox 2 – Survey and Clearance Profile

According to AMAE's Operations Officer, *"In Albania, with more mine rows than minefields, the most effective way for deployment of resources is to carry out Technical Survey and clearance simultaneously in the same task"*.

Mine and ERW clearance is conducted by six teams – four mine clearance and two battle area clearance teams – managed and tasked by DCA. Each team has six deminers supervised by a team leader and deputy team leader with a medic and a fully equipped ambulance available on site.

In the limited time available during the mission, it was only possible to visit one working mine clearance site (SR 1569). We saw DCA Team No. 2 in Letaj, Has district. This team had been clearing the site for the previous three weeks. The suspected contaminated area contains both AT and AP mines. In the eight working days preceding the site visit, 538 m² had been cleared and seven mines had been discovered. The progress indicates that in eight days, the teams had cleared only 60% of what they should have cleared, although bad weather, and difficult ground condition and vegetation may have slowed clearance during this time. The Evaluation Team recognizes that this clearance rate does not apply to every team or clearance project.

The teams were using manual clearance methods. The Personal Protective Equipment, mine detectors, and hand tools seemed to be in good condition. The operating system used was one man per lane. The marking of the rest area and the access lane to the mined areas was clearly demarcated. The task dossier had checked all of the required documents. The SOP folder was checked and had all of the SOPs in it. The team leader appeared to have been well-trained and was knowledgeable about all aspects of his responsibilities and the operating procedures. Due to the limited time we had, we could not verify the community liaison activities. The team leader and his team, however, confirmed that the community leader and other village elders visited them every other day and were kept up-to-date on mine clearance progress.

As mentioned above, survey and clearance are conducted in parallel. Once a mine row or pattern of mines is found, as a general principle, the AMAE Operations Officer will task the clearance organization to clear five meters either side of the line, and extend 5 to 10 meters from the last mine found in the case of antipersonnel blast mines, and 25 meters in the case of fragmentation mines. These parameters are based on the draft of the National Mine Action Standards – Risk Management. Battle area clearance, in particular with cluster munitions, follows the same principle as AP fragmentation. Following the clearance of the minefield, the area may be further surveyed based on discussions with the Operations Officer, Quality Management Monitors and the mine impacted community.

As part of a post-clearance check, the Evaluation Team interviewed the former village leader of Dobruna who said that an area called "LUGU I RALUB" had been cleared in 2000 but that the villagers were still afraid to use the land. It should be noted that the former leader of Dobruna has had other issues with the mine action programme. In September 2001, FSD had to cease its clearance operations in Dobruna because some villagers with the backing of the village leader requested FSD to pay for parking their vehicles in Dobruna. Although AMAE may consider the village leader to be an instigator a charge that the land was not adequately cleared is different than charging a fee for parking.

The Evaluation Team could not conduct a broader survey of the community on the use of the land after clearance or their confidence level in the clearance operations.

Table 6 above indicates what needs to be completed by district while also illustrating the need to clarify the numbers in order to ensure that current planning assumptions are correct.

The figures in the table provided by AMAE differ slightly from other clearance figures provided by AMAE. Table 3 above shows there is 2,018,000 m² remaining after a correction of 42,000 m² was made in the carryover from 2002 to 2003. The difference in numbers, although miniscule, underlines the Evaluation Team's finding of the need for AMAE to strengthen its information management, documentation and dissemination processes. Nevertheless, the numbers are indicative for each district and are useful when comparing among the three districts what remains to be done.

As most of the remaining contaminated areas are located in remote areas in Has and Tropoje districts, special logistic arrangements may be needed. A significant number of hazard areas are located on high mountain ranges where weather conditions are more adverse than in Kukes and Has districts. In addition, roads leading to some of those areas are in bad condition, adding to the logistical constraints of accessing those areas. These factors also need to be considered when formulating plans for Tropoje, which based on the current approach of clearing areas from south to north will result in Tropoje being the last of the three districts to be cleared.

RECOMMENDATION: AMAE and DCA should meet to clarify the amount of contaminated area left to clear by the end of 2009 and determine whether the trend to increase the amount of clearance by 20 percent will continue and the possible impact on the target of clearing all mined areas by the end of 2009.

RECOMMENDATION: AMAE should hire a new Community Liaison Officer (CLO) to alleviate the discontent among the laid off deminers and ensure clearance operations can continue as planned.

RECOMMENDATION: AMAE should conduct an independent post clearance analysis in all 39 mine impacted villages.

3.2.1 National clearance capacity for 2008-2009

The Albanian completion initiative plan re-states the long term goal of the programme to establish a National Clearance Capacity (NCC) in the form of a national NGO. Under the plan, DCA would train the teams and UNDP would facilitate the legal and institutional processes to ensure that the NCC teams would be an independent legal and viable entity by 2007. The entity, recently named the Albanian Mine Action Organization (AMCO), would then replace DCA and clear the remaining mined areas in Albania. In November 2006, DCA announced its departure from Albania and that the clearance teams had achieved a sufficient technical level as deminers, team leaders and supervisors. By May 2007, however, AMCO had not yet become a legal entity as the process to register AMCO as a national NGO was never initiated. DCA continues to manage the teams and now plans to do so until the end of 2009 when the project will be completed.

3.2.2 National mine action standards

AMAE is in the final stage of developing the Albania National Mine Action Standards (NMAS). With support from GICHD, AMAE drafted an English version of NMAS with

Evaluation of the Albanian Mine Action Programme

a format that reflects a practical approach to mine action in Albania and which is perhaps one of the best set of national standards currently available within the mine action community. Although largely based on the International Mine Action Standards (IMAS), the framework and contents are quite different reflecting local realities and the current and future requirements of mine action in Albania.

The NMAS are currently being translated into Albanian. Once translated, they will be checked for technical consistency and then will be shared with relevant ministries and authorities for comments. The NMAS will be submitted to AMAC for the review of all member ministries and for legal opinion in June 2007 and a final approved version is expected by the end of September 2007. Once approved, they will replace the current draft TSS and the DCA SOPs and will become the AMAE SOPs.

RECOMMENDATION: Although the time remaining before clearance is complete is not long, the Evaluation Team is of the view that AMAE should proceed to finalise the national standards as they would still be relevant for addressing the residual threat of landmines after 2009, as well as EOD issues. Also, if AMAE is not incorporated within the Ministry of Defence (MoD), and responsibility for EOD remains with the MoD, the standards would be a key document for the MoD to draw upon.

3.3 Victim Assistance: Meeting Survivors' Needs

Albania's mine action programme aims to establish a sustainable survivor assistance capability that promotes the inclusion of mine survivors into the wider strategy of the Ministry of Health, and the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs' strategy in support of people with disabilities where they will access services like other citizens of Albania. In 2002, the programme adopted an integrated victim assistance strategy to provide medical assistance, physical rehabilitation, prostheses, social and psychological support, and socio-economic reintegration for all mine survivors and families in which a member was killed as a result of a landmine accident.

Between 1999/2000, when the casualty rates were extraordinarily high prior to the establishment of the mine action programme, and 2005, the number of landmine victims fell to two per year. Since 2005, no accidents have been reported. The elimination of landmine accidents and victims is the major achievement of the mine action programme in Albania.

The US Department of State, ITF, UNDP/BCPR/DfID), the European Commission through the Completion Initiative and the Government of France have been the major contributors to victim assistance programs.

The main contributions from the key actors in victim assistance include the following:

- The ICRC has provided raw materials for the production of prostheses and technical support and is funding the two-and-a-half year training program for one technician who will work at the National Orthotic Prosthetic Centre (NOPC) upon completion of the training.
- The Ministry of Health has provided funding for the construction of new premises for the NOPC. Tenders have been issued for the construction, and it is anticipated that construction will begin by mid-2007.
- The National Trauma Centre in Tirana and the Regional Hospital in Kukes have surgeons on staff for trauma and orthopaedic surgery.
- The Slovenia Institute for Rehabilitation has provided prostheses to amputees they could not obtain in Albania.
- The NOPC in Tirana provides prostheses to lower limb amputees and the Kukes Hospital Prostheses Repair Centre has the capacity to repair them when damaged or worn out. Upper limb (hands and arms) and above knee amputees are sent to the Institute for Rehabilitation in Slovenia.
- Since 2006, Handicap International, through the Ministry of Health, has been providing training and support for technicians and physiotherapists that will benefit all of Albania and not just landmine survivors. In association with people with disabilities and others, Handicap International has also advocated for the introduction of physiotherapy as a discipline of study at the University of Tirana, and 22 students are currently enrolled in the degree programme.
- Since 2004, UNDP has implemented several projects in support of victims assistance and reintegration, including the establishment of a Community Based Network (see below), the establishment of a Prosthesis Repair Workshop at the Kukes Hospital, the implementation of a training courses in support of employment and self-employment of mine victims (see below) and the provision of medical equipment and materials to health structures at local (Hospital of Kukes and Tropoje) and central level (National Prosthetic Centre).



In Kukes, projects that support to landmine survivors and their families are implemented by the Victims of Mines Association (VMA), the sole non-governmental organization (NGO) operating in Kukes, in association with AMAE and local medical staff. VMA, who has played a key role in facilitating the provision of support to mine survivors and their families, was tasked under a UNDP Project to establish the Community

Based Rehabilitation (CBR) network which is comprised of 30 nurses each based in a separate mine-affected village. All 30 nurses have received training in how to provide basic rehabilitation and psycho-social trauma support to landmine survivors, and how to train patients in the care of their prostheses. They provide emergency and on-going medical assistance to all community members, including mine/UXO survivors. Survivors are also able to access medical support at the commune level, through local health clinics, as well as through the Kukes district hospital which is based in Kukes town.

VMA operates a revolving loan fund to assist mine survivors in establishing home-based economies. The photograph above shows a mine survivor receiving benefits of the revolving loan fund.

Textbox 3 – Revolving Loan Fund

The three-year fund targets females in each household and has been operating successfully for two years in 39 mine-affected villages in the Kukes region. Based on community consultations, it was decided that one cow would be provided to prioritised families that have lost cattle as a result of landmine contamination. Recipients were prioritised according a system of points, agreed by the community, based on injury and economic status. Women were selected as recipients as they are often the family members in charge of looking after cattle. Each recipient is required to pay for the cow within two years. The cows are used to produce and sell yoghurt, curd or meat to families and friends in the area. As of May 2007, 82 percent of all recipients have fully re-paid the loan for their cattle.

VMA, with EC funding through UNDP, also organizes vocational training classes that provide training and support in developing small enterprises. Through VMA, survivors have been attended classes in computers, English, electronic repair and maintenance, welding and hairdressing. Through this training, some have been able to obtain employment which has enabled them to feel more engaged and positive about their future. For example, one survivor the Evaluation Team met has opened his own appliance repair business following the training that he received through VMA. VMA has written a proposal to develop a self-sustaining handicraft enterprise which would enable mine-affected communities to develop and market crafts domestically and internationally.

3.3.1 National Strategy for People with Disabilities

At the national level, AMAE and VMA have worked with the wider disability sector, MoLSA and the Ministry of Health to advocate for a National Strategy on Disability, which was been approved. The strategy complies with recently adopted international standards for people with disabilities. A budget and concrete implementation plan remain to be developed, but if and when done, the strategy will provide all people with disabilities in Albania with free medical services, transportation support and accessibility where needed. Concerns remain as to whether the government will fulfil its commitments under the strategy and provide the political and financial resources required for effective implementation. Fundamentally, however, an awareness campaign throughout Albania is needed to change peoples' attitudes towards disability and people who have them.

Ultimately the issue of socio-economic re-integration of survivors and their families is directly linked to the wider development of the Kukës region. As the Government of Albania develops strategies in association with the international community for ensuring Albania's accession into the European Union and NATO, due consideration needs to be given to the development of marginalized areas like the Kukës region. Thus far, many survivors have opted to leave the region because of poor access to medical services, difficult terrain for prostheses, as well as because the region is economically depressed with limited employment opportunities. Until the Albanian government prioritises broader issues of infrastructure, agricultural development and diversification, capacity strengthening and economic development, the region will continue to suffer from isolation and marginalisation from the rest of the country, and increasing rural-urban migration.

3.3.2 Victim Statistics

Since 1999, 272 casualties have been reported as a result of landmine accidents. Of these, 34 (13%) were killed. It is worth noting that this fatality rate is extremely low compared to the global average which ranges from 30%-40%, sometimes even as high as 50%. All of the 238 survivors have been recipients of assistance through the variety of victim assistance programmes available.

Table 7 – Numbers of landmine victims since 1999

| Year | Injured | Killed | Total |
|-------------------|----------------|---------------|--------------|
| 1999 | 171 | 20 | 191 |
| 2000 | 31 | 4 | 35 |
| 2001 | 5 | 2 | 7 |
| 2002 | 6 | 2 | 8 |
| 2003 | 4 | 0 | 4 |
| 2004 | 19 | 6 | 25 |
| 2005 | 2 | 0 | 2 |
| 2006 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| May-07 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Total | 238 | 34 | 272 |
| <i>Percentage</i> | <i>87%</i> | <i>13%</i> | <i>100%</i> |

Table 8 below shows that 92% of the victims were male and, as Table 9 shows, many were of working age and were the main household income earner.

Table 8 – Numbers of victims, by sex

| Gender | Injured | Killed | Total | Percentage |
|-------------------|------------|------------|-------------|------------|
| Male | 219 | 31 | 250 | 92% |
| Female | 19 | 3 | 22 | 8% |
| Total | 238 | 34 | 272 | 100% |
| <i>Percentage</i> | <i>88%</i> | <i>13%</i> | <i>100%</i> | |

At the time each accident occurred, one-quarter of the victims were 18 years of age or younger. Many of them are now adults as 80% of the accidents occurred in 1999. More than 60% of the survivors are now in their prime working years.

Table 9 – Victims of mine accidents, by age

| Age | Number | Percentage |
|--------------|------------|-------------|
| 0 - 3 | 0 | 0% |
| 4 - 18 | 72 | 26% |
| 19-39 | 155 | 57% |
| 40-59 | 35 | 13% |
| Over 60 | 10 | 4% |
| Total | 272 | 100% |

3.4 Mine Risk Education: Working Towards Complete Coverage

Since 1999, Mine Risk Education (MRE) has been provided in the 39 mine affected communities in Kukes region. At present, VMA is targeting 21-22 villages in the Kukes region according to areas where clearance is occurring. MRE in Kukes has generally been very effective, with complete coverage in all mine-affected villages. Approximately 15,000 individuals are targeted per year. The goal of MRE is to discourage life threatening behaviour and activities among at-risk vulnerable groups. Although it is not possible to make a direct link that MRE contributes to reducing mine accidents, it is reasonable to assert that as a result of the intensity of the MRE programme since 2001, it has contributed to reducing the number of accidents to zero since 2005.

VMA is the lead organisation in Kukes undertaking MRE. The Albania Red Cross (ARC) also undertakes some MRE activities; however they have scaled down their efforts in recent years. VMA's MRE work is undertaken through a network of community-based organisations known as Anti-Mine Committees, as well as through peace activists. They organise activities and disseminate information through school concerts, competitions, plays, expositions, pamphlets, posters, leaflets and media outlets which inform communities of the dangers of landmines and ERW.

Through AMAE community liaison activities, MRE also occurs throughout the demining process as part of demining worksite preparation, routinely during demining operations as well as part of the task handover and post clearance reviews.

Evaluation of the Albanian Mine Action Programme

The table below shows the variety of community-based MRE activities, the thoroughness of the programme and the comprehensive coverage.

Table 10 – MRE activities in Kukës Region from 2001 to 2006

| Activity | 2001 | 2002 | 2003 | 2004 | 2005 | 2006 | Total |
|---|--------|--------|--------|-------|-------|-------|--------|
| Production and distribution of MRE leaflets and awareness materials | 10,500 | 16,146 | 16,290 | 5,500 | 4,150 | 2,800 | 55,386 |
| Mine Risk Education Sessions | 276 | 256 | 308 | 342 | 220 | 116 | 1,518 |
| Villages visited | 96 | 107 | 124 | 195 | 146 | 152 | 820 |
| MRE school activities | 0 | 70 | 115 | 140 | 145 | 58 | 528 |
| Production & distribution of MRE training manuals | 0 | 70 | 140 | 100 | 70 | 100 | 480 |
| MRE public village meetings/demonstrations | 39 | 54 | 70 | 112 | 109 | 94 | 478 |
| Mobile Theatre Performances | 0 | 40 | 23 | 70 | 67 | 34 | 234 |
| MRE Trainings/Seminars/Workshops/Round tables | 4 | 30 | 39 | 39 | 30 | 3 | 145 |
| Mobile MRE Exposition | 0 | 0 | 15 | 30 | 43 | 22 | 110 |
| Handover ceremony of cleared area | 0 | 0 | 4 | 10 | 21 | 16 | 51 |
| Mobile speaking tours/slides | 0 | 0 | 0 | 10 | 22 | 8 | 40 |
| Post clearance activities | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 10 | 10 |

AMAE's objective to achieve sustainability with MRE is to integrate it into Albania's school curriculum as part of a broader child protection programming that also includes small arms, UXO, human trafficking and global terrorism as subjects. UNICEF, the Institute of Curricula and Standards, VMA and AMAE developed the curriculum and plan to pilot the project later in 2007. Funds are now being sought to train teachers in the Kukës region. UNICEF has committed some funding to the project for 2007 that will enable the teacher training to begin. AMAE will monitor the pilot phase of this initiative while in cooperation with UNICEF will refine the curriculum, so that it can be permanently integrated into the education system. UNICEF and AMAE are working with the Ministry of Education and Sciences to ensure that these objectives will be achieved.

The Evaluation Team had the MRE curriculum translated from Albanian to English during the evaluation mission. The translation revealed a number of inaccuracies about landmines and raised some concerns about how people with disabilities are perceived. The Evaluation Team also questions the appropriateness of some of the content for children. The box below illustrates one problem.

Textbox 4 – Data about Albania in the MRE curriculum

- 1 million landmines are in the hands of the population.
- 215,000 anti personnel mines are in the ground in, mainly near military depots.
- There are 20 to 30 hectares contaminated by landmines in 15 regions in all the country.
- 56 people have been killed and 59 others injured in the 15 contaminated regions.
- The most damaged area is Qafe-Shtame with 29 killed.

- During the years 1997-1998 a total of 2,000 people were killed, of which
- 40% were killed from mines, UXO-s, bombs, grenades etc.
- During this period, 20,000 people were injured, of which 5,000 were children.
- During the years 1970-1990 Albania was producing anti-personnel mines, but it stopped producing them in 1990. Landmines found in Albania were made in Russia, China and Albania.
- In order to clear all mine mines in Albania approximately US\$120 to 150 million is needed.

RECOMMENDATION: Review the students' book and the teachers' manual for accuracy and appropriateness before a final print run is undertaken and before the pilot project begins.

3.5 Actively Linking Mine Action and Development

Albania's landmine contamination problem is largely perceived as a physically and politically marginal issue, which impacts one isolated region of the country affecting only 39 villages out of a total of approximately 2,900. This is a prevalence rate of 1.3 percent. Both the Albanian government and the international community priorities are government reform and restructuring in order to ensure Albania's accession to the EU and achieving NATO membership.

While Albania's *National Strategy for Socio-Economic Development (2002-2004)*, Albania's first Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper, identifies the country's main development challenges, the problem of landmine contamination is not mentioned. The April 2007 draft of the new *National Strategy for Development and Integration (2007-2013)* also does not refer specifically to landmine contamination. However, the strategy does cite the problem of regional disparity and the intention to develop a crosscutting strategy on regional development as well as a Disadvantaged Areas Development Programme aimed at eliminating disparities and maximising socio-economic development, which will presumably include the developmental challenges of the Kukes region.

Albania's national budget does not include or refer to mine action specifically. However, the government has contributed to the mine action programme through the provision of in-kind contributions, which is estimated at USD\$2 million. This in-kind assistance has been delivered through:

- Ministry of Defence: provision of one stand-by MEDEVAC helicopter and explosive for free for clearance operations, use of military hospital in Kukes.
- Ministry of Health: construction of new NOPC in Tirana, use of military hospital in Kukes, construction of PMR facilities and prosthetic repair workshop.
- Ministry of Education: MRE curriculum development and support for teacher training

Albania's regional development strategy for Kukes, the *Kukes MDG Regional Development Strategy*, highlights the problem of landmine contamination and the way in which landmines have contributed to poverty in Kukes. Landmines have not created impoverished conditions but they have exacerbated poverty in the border area with Kosovo. It also outlines clear objectives for clearance, mine risk education, support for mine and UXO survivors and community-based infrastructure development which are based on Albania's mine action programme.

Evaluation of the Albanian Mine Action Programme

Following from the regional development strategy, the UNDP initiated a 3-year development programme focused on the Kukes region, known as the Kukes Regional Development Initiative (KRDI). The KRDI builds on the UNDP's Local Governance Programme and Area Based Development Framework for the region, and forms part of the UNDP's wider efforts to enable Albania to gain accession to the European Union (EU). It is funded by the European Commission (EC) through UNDP.

The purpose of the KRDI is to promote sustainable livelihoods through the rehabilitation and/or reconstruction of small community infrastructure works. The KRDI is being implemented in three phases, and thus far, the first phase has targeted community based organisations, local governments and community members in the poorest villages within Kukes district. Villages and the municipality of Kukes district were prioritised based on lack of internal heating and water supply, limited or no access to schools and health centres and those affected by landmines.

Since 2005, approximately 39 small-scale community projects have been established, largely through funding from international donors, but also through financial contributions from local governments and in-kind contributions from community members in the form of provision of materials and machinery. The infrastructure projects include: production and processing; irrigation, electricity and infrastructure; improvements to health, education and sanitation infrastructure; and small trade facilities and export promotion. Community members have been involved in all aspects of the programme, from project selection, to supervision and ongoing maintenance in partnership with local governments. The main improvements include improvements to irrigation canals, improved school conditions and access to health care.

The first phase of the KRDI is to be followed by a second phase of labour intensive development interventions (e.g. job creation, agricultural development, small business development, etc.) which will continue in Kukes and Has, and extend coverage to Tropoje district, and again prioritising communes affected by landmine and UXO contamination. The specific focus of the second phase of the KRDI is: economic development (a continuation of the first phase of the KRDI), capacity building of local government institutions and cross border trade. Some of the possible sectors which the second phase will focus on include tourism, agriculture, industry and small business development. The UNDP Kukes office has developed a funding proposal and work plan for 2008. Overall, the KRDI is a positive example of the alignment of mine action with development priorities. Both the UNDP and AMAE should be credited for actively seeking to ensure effective links and synergy between the development and mine action programmes in Kukes.

When assessing the extent to which the mine action programme in Albania is effectively linked to wider development in the Kukes region, the following points should be considered as key achievements:

- AMAE sets priorities for mine clearance based on the development and security needs of mine-affected communities, and consults them at key stages in the prioritisation clearance process.
- Within six months of clearance taking place, AMAE's community liaison officer and VMA returns to the areas to check how the community is using the land, and whether it is being used for development purposes. This is recorded in AMAE's task dossier control sheet.

Evaluation of the Albanian Mine Action Programme

- AMAE has made concerted efforts to ensure close coordination with the UNDP Kukes Team in the design, planning and implementation phases of the KRDI – to ensure close coordination and synergy in relation to promoting development initiatives in mine-affected areas post-clearance. KRDI staff participate in monthly AMAP coordination meetings in Kukes. As a result, areas which have been cleared of landmines are among those which have been prioritised for community infrastructure projects under the KRDI.
- The mine action programme has helped to strengthen local community and government capacity in Kukes while addressing with broader development issues that affect the region. For example, the community based network of Anti-Mine Committees and peace activists are currently involved in the construction and rehabilitation of KRDI infrastructure projects, and they can be used to support future poverty reduction and health and education initiatives in Kukes as part of the UNDP's Kukes Region ABD programme.
- KRDI was able to take advantage of and build on the investment made by international donors to support mine clearance, by utilising local capacities, and ensuring that mine-affected areas benefit from improvements in community infrastructure.

RECOMMENDATION: Anti-Mine Committees and peace activists should also be used in future for community development and awareness-raising in future.

RECOMMENDATION: The only NGO working in the Kukes region is VMA which works on victim assistance and MRE, and which AMAE has worked closely since the start of the mine action programme. Given that complete coverage has been achieved with regards to MRE and that all mine victims and survivors have received some form of assistance, VMA is well positioned to shift its mandate to promoting broader social and economic development for all communities in the Kukes region.

Apart from the KRDI, two major infrastructure projects are the completion of the Kukes airport and the construction of a high speed road, financed by the World Bank, which will link Kukes with Kosovo and the rest of Europe, and the sea at Durrës, west of Tirana. It will cut travel time between Tirana and Kukes from 5-6 hours to approximately 2 hours. However, with the airport not yet open and the road construction far from complete, the economic benefits of both are several years away. Also, it is not entirely clear whether and how this road will benefit the Kukes region, but several individuals that the Evaluation Team interviewed indicated that it would likely, at the very least, draw a greater number of travellers to or through Kukes, which could require an increase in enterprises such as restaurants, petrol stations and hotels. It is certainly hoped that the road will help to end the relative isolation of the region, facilitate greater cross-border trade, generate greater economic development in the region and help to stem migration from Kukes.

Textbox 5 – Setting clearance priorities in Kukes

A survey was done of the mined areas by the Albanian Armed Forces and international organisations immediately following the conflict in 1999, by asking communities where they thought the mined areas were.

In each of the 39 mine-affected villages, AMAE asked the communities which areas were a priority for clearance based on their development and security needs, as not all could be done simultaneously.

The community views on prioritisation for each village were then submitted to the local authorities at the commune level.

The Commune Council and Chair of the Commune reviewed the community prioritisation for all of the villages within each Commune.

At the regional level, these priorities were discussed with the Regional Chair, Prefect of Kukes, border police and AAF and were approved for each district (Kukes, Has and Tropoje). AMAC approves the final list of priorities.

AMAE then tasks Danish Church Aid to clear areas in batches based on this list of priorities. This priority-setting procedure is carried out at the start of each year. There are also instances where the community comes to AMAE with an urgent request, which is then classified as high priority for clearance, and which AMAE tasks DCA to clear.

3.5.1 Post clearance benefits

Once land is cleared, a physical handover is made between DCA and AMAE the village leaders inform the residents which areas have been cleared and whether they are safe to use. In 2005, DCA conducted a post-clearance assessment of the socio economic impact of clearance undertaken in 2004. This assessment found that there were 600 direct beneficiaries of clearance of 16 minefields in 2004. According to the individuals interviewed in Kukes by the Evaluation Team, cleared land in Kukes is being used in largely the same manner as the way that it was used before the landmines were laid, that is, for agriculture, pasture and firewood collection purposes.

Clearance has also resulted in improved road access in some areas, as many areas were cut off or inaccessible because of damaged and mined roads. Border crossing points have also been cleared which has improved community access to Kosovo and the efficiency and safety of police border patrols. Clearance has also improved the availability of potable water resources. Many irrigation channels and water supply points/wells were affected and have since been rehabilitated. This is critical in the Kukes region where two thirds of households do not have access to water in their homes. Children are now better able to attend school. Some children in the village of Dobruna are now able to attend school in Goden, on the Kosovo side of the border where they previously attended, but which they were unable to access after the conflict because the road was mined.

Apart from DCA's assessment, no other study has been done on the socio-economic benefits from mine clearance in Kukes, and possible development opportunities for the region as a whole.

A further developmental outcome of mine clearance in the region has been the training and employment of local villagers as deminers by DCA. From 2004-2006, mine action provided approximately 300 jobs and generated USD\$5 million dollars in income in the Kukes region. With the reduction of clearance teams in 2007, approximately 180 people in Kukes region are still employed in mine action providing close to \$1 million in household income to the region. The jobs in mine action are highly coveted and employment is regionally balanced among Kukes, Has and Tropoje districts. Last year tensions from the unemployment created when DCA reduced the number of demining teams from 14 to 6.

3.6 Albanian Mine Action Committee (AMAC)

Since 1999 the Albanian Mine Action Committee (AMAC) is by law the inter-ministerial coordination body of the government of Albania and its national mine action authority. It represents government in international fora on landmine issues and meets twice a year to review the mine action programme, and if necessary approve strategies and projects.

AMAC determines the overall direction of mine action, sets priorities and endorses the strategic objectives of the program. AMAC is significant in that it has been effective in engaging a wide cross section of government ministries, and donors as observers, and is able to attract regular and high-level attendance to its meetings. For example, in February 2007, attendance included representatives from eight government ministries, UNDP, the European Commission, UNICEF, the embassies of the United States, France, Germany and the Czech Republic.

Given the large number of participants attending AMAC meetings, it has not been a body through in which key issues can be discussed and debated in detail. However, it has been used more as a forum for raising awareness and generating government and donor buy-in to Albania's mine action programme. While the Ministry of Defence is obligated by law to chair AMAC, there are indications that the chair would appreciate greater engagement and involvement from other government ministries, such as the Ministries of Health, Education and Labour and Social Affairs. This may be perceived by some as an indication that the Ministry of Defence's commitment to mine action is waning. However, it should also be regarded as attempts by the Ministry of Defence to ensure mine action is mainstreamed within key government ministries, and does not remain isolated and perceived solely as a military or security issue.

3.7 Albania Mine Action Executive (AMAE)

AMAE was created in October 1999 to meet the need for a national coordination body in the recently established mine action program. It began with a director and an interpreter and has evolved through the support of donors and UNDP into a well-respected dynamic mine action coordination unit based in Tirana with an operational base in Kukës with a variety of key functions. It can be said that AMAE is the face of mine action in Albania. As Albania approaches mine free status and the end of the mine action program is less than three years away the Evaluation Team was requested to review and assess the capacity of AMAE and whether they possess the capacity to complete the mine action program without the assistance of a UNDP Chief Technical Advisor.

3.7.1 Coordination

AMAE coordinates all mine action activities in Albania. The Evaluation Team observed that the planning and coordination seem to be excellent among the AMAE, its regional office, VMA and DCA. AMAE and its implementing partners hold regular coordination and planning meetings. These meetings are attended by the Director of AMAE and all regional stakeholders and minutes are recorded of each meeting. During these meetings achievements are reviewed and priorities are discussed. The process for determining priorities for clearance involves the mine impacted

communities, is well understood by the regional government and in the end is representative of what the community wants.

AMAE also maintains good coordination and relations with the mine affected communities, the central and local government bodies and the donors. During the short visit to the Kukes Regional Office, the Evaluation Team observed that the programme has a strong planning and coordination mechanism in place. In addition, the AMAE organizes an annual staff retreat where priorities are set and annual work plans developed for the following year.

3.7.2 Accreditation

AMAE accredits all mine action organizations in Albania upon signing of a new contract to begin or continue projects based on the SOP for accreditation. In the case of DCA and clearance activities this results in an annual accreditation process. This includes all individual mine action assets, i.e., manual clearance, Explosives Ordinance Disposal (EOD), Battle Area Clearance (BAC), Mine Risk Education (MRE) and to a limited extent, agencies conducting specific mine victim assistance activities. The accreditation process consists of two parts; organisation accreditation and organisational licensing. The goal of such accreditation is to promote a common standard of management practice, operational capability and safety throughout the mine action programme. In the past AMAE has also accredited VMA, the Albanian Red Cross, and FSD.

3.7.3 Task Management

AMAE's Kukes Regional Office (KRO) is also responsible for tasking, quality management and monitoring, community liaison and the handover of cleared lands. Under the supervision of the Operations Officer who reports to the Director of AMAE, there are currently, three Quality Management Monitors, an IMSMA Specialist and an Administrative Assistant to assist in these tasks.

Textbox 6 – Tasking

The KRO maintains an operational register of all tasks issued to DCA based on existing impact survey identification number for each individual task. Tasks are allocated and managed using a formal Task Dossiers system which contains all the information and maps regarding the task. The task dossiers set the clearance requirement based on task data sheet of IMSMA. It has an operational coordination cover sheet that indicates all operation decisions have been made throughout clearance from day one when the task is issued to the day last when the task is cleared and handed over to the community. The Evaluation Team has also noted the availability of a task dossier with the DCA team No 2 on site.

The system seems to be very good and this could serve as a good model of task management for other programmes.

3.7.4 Quality Management

The structure of Kukes Regional Office includes a Quality Management (QM) Team Leader and two QM Monitors. All three are trained demining Team Leaders with level 3 EOD capability. Quality Management is conducted in two phases, quality

assurance (monitoring) and quality control (post clearance inspections). The quality assurance and the quality control are conducted simultaneously by a QM Monitor in one visit. Operational plans for QM Monitors are developed on monthly basis, reviewed, and revised every week to ensure it is in line with the DCA operational plan. The two QM Monitors visit each demining site twice a week. They perform two main functions on each site 1) on site monitoring - to look at the demining team's personnel, equipment, and procedures to ensure they are in accordance with the approved SOPs and to achieve 100% mine clearance, with minimal risk to life, 2) to inspect 5 -10% of cleared land through sampling to ensure the land is cleared in accordance with the task order clearance specifications. In Albania, these two functions are conducted concurrently in one visit to ensure rapid handover of cleared land to end user.

Looking at the records of QM Monitors, it appears that there has been no critical non conformity since 2005 (since the last demining incident in 2005). It is recommended that the AMAE's inspection procedures be reviewed to ensure an effective and efficient monitoring system is in place. One of the areas that AMAE could look at is the inspection level. The inspection level reflects the proven effectiveness and capabilities of the demining team. They provide an incentive to improve performance. It is therefore recommended that AMAE should reduce the frequency of monitoring from twice in a week to perhaps once in a week, and instead focus on other aspects of the performance of team such as information gathering prior to survey and clearance. As the monitors are slightly less experienced as the clearance teams perhaps such an intensive level of inspection can be revised and more focus put on pre-survey and pre-clearance visits to the villages to better determine the extent of the landmine contamination. As mentioned earlier in this report 9 of 28 tasks ended with no landmines or ERW found.

The SOPs for QA and monitoring state the criteria and the methods necessary to achieve quality results for clearance but the SOPs do not provide explicit criteria for determining non-conformance nor what criteria should be used to decide whether cleared land should be rejected by the Quality Monitors.

The system described above is unique to the mine action programme in Albania, but appears to work. The effectiveness of monitoring teams is measured by the follow-up action taken by the inspected teams, and it is to be hoped that this will be immediate and systematic, which does not occur in some other national programmes.

With six deminers in one team, the team Leader or the deputy team supervise each set of three deminers. Under this structure it is recommended that the team leaders, when possible, perform better QA sampling on the other deminers which can add to the thoroughness of the sampling process.

3.7.5 Handover Procedures

The official handover of cleared land to end users is an important part of the task management process and organized through a formal ceremony. The Evaluation Team was unable to visually verify this process as no cleared area was available for handover during the visit. However, based on information gathered from various actors, it appears that the procedure is good and inclusive. In Albania, this is done in a well-coordinated manner with the local communities and in the presence of a government authority. AMAE receives formally the land cleared from the demining team collating all task documentation into a consolidated task completion report. This

includes all documentation originally provided in the Task Dossier as well as supporting documents for completion survey. The consolidated task completion report is then submitted to AMAE in accordance with agreed completion plan. On-site handover procedures are comprehensive. They include the identification of the boundary markers, deminers walking through the area, information on the areas cleared and the methodology used, and signing of handover documents and clearance certificate.

When cleared areas are handed over while others wait to be cleared or are under suspension because of the winter, it is very important that the communities remain aware of the ongoing danger. This should be the responsibility of DCA, VMA and AMAE to ensure this requirement is fulfilled.

3.7.6 Information Management

Database

The Information Management system currently used in AMAE is the Information Management System for Mine Action (IMSMA) Version 3.0. Version 4.0 is in development and the GICHD is scheduled to release it later in 2007.

The database is populated with information collected through general survey by AAF from assessment and technical and impact surveys conducted by FSD and DCA during 2003 to 2006 and subsequent clearance reports. While the IMSMA software is capable of producing the basic information required for tasking and reporting the system has not been sufficiently customized to allow the incorporation of details with respect to MRE, VA and clearance progress. A separate spreadsheet has been prepared to record and report clearance progress but this is insufficient to meet the current needs of the programme. The result is that task dossiers sheets do not offer data that could be of enhanced usefulness for management purposes. The database on landmine victims and MRE is managed by the AMAE VA and MRE officer in Tirana. Only some of this data appears and is available in the database in Kukes.

In addition, the maps produced are of poor quality and of limited value. One example of this weakness is the Evaluation Team was unable to obtain a map showing the remaining current contaminated areas. A good up-dated map would also help donors better understand the remaining problem. While the IMSMA 4.0 will have an improved GIS module and should result in better map, an assessment of the current equipment at the Kukes Regional Office should also be conducted to determine if the plotter and printer are sufficient to meet the needs of mine action planners and other partners. The database unit needs to be improved and strengthened.

Reporting

AMAE produces a voluminous number of pamphlets, brochures, reports, photographs and CDs. It has also produced a video of the mine action programme and has a website. The two weaknesses in this impressive effort in documentation and public relations are the lack of quality maps and a simple consolidated report for donors, and other stakeholders on a quarterly basis. While the Mine Action programme is rich in public relations, brochures, videos and pamphlets it is very weak in producing maps.

The Evaluation Team was unable to find one photograph from the hundreds provided in the reports and presentations reviewed of an adult woman participating in the various activities of the program. The victim assistance goals specifically state that

women are targeted in the revolving loan program because they are the ones who take care of the animals. Yet, all of the photographs promoting the benefits and achievements and the survivors receiving the animals involve only men. AMAE explained this is partly due to cultural reasons of women being unwilling to have their photograph taken and then placed in brochures and reports for promotional purposes. Nevertheless, the Evaluation Team believes a more equitable gender balance is required in the promotional material and reports to reflect the goals and achievements of specific programmes.

In this report we limited our use of the available statistics because many of the numbers found in proposals, monthly reports, annual reports and pamphlets and brochures were inconsistent. While the differences in the numbers reported in a program the size of Albania's may seem insignificant, they are not and should be consistent and precise as funding is tied to the number of clearance teams, area to be cleared and people assisted. For example, the number of amputees receiving prostheses varied from 53 to 100, and included repeat beneficiaries, and the actual amount of remaining land to clear varied from 40,000 to 400,000 square meters. We believe these discrepancies can be cleared up quickly and explained with more streamlined reporting from the implementing partners to AMAE using formats provided by AMAE and by identifying the key data needed for donors and other stakeholders.

Surveillance

Currently AMAE collects data on landmine victims and victims from AXO and UXO accidents and has a database of more than 400 people injured from AXO. It is the opinion of the Evaluation Team that neither AMAE monitoring and nor assistance to the casualties from AXO should be provided. One objective of the mine action programme in Albania has been to build the capacity of the Ministry of Health and to advocate for all people with disabilities. The Evaluation Team believes these efforts have made sufficient progress for every victim of AXO to access services in Tirana or the regional hospital and with training programmes in progress this capacity, in theory, should only improve. Expanding victim assistance programs under AMAE similar to those provided to landmine survivors in the Kukës Region would not be a valid expansion of its mission.

AMAЕ, however, can provide a valuable service through 2009 by continuing to collect this information and work with the Ministry of Health to develop a nation-wide surveillance (reporting) system on casualties from the AXO. It is important to nationalise this process and to work with the MoH to develop a system on collecting and reporting information on casualties from AXO as a public health issue.

3.7.7 Community Liaison

Perhaps the most striking characteristic of mine action in Albania is the strong community based approach it has in mitigating the risk of landmines and ERW. This has been fundamental to the success of mine action in Albania. In all of the interviews with the Evaluation Team in the Kukës region the participants were well-aware of the mine action programmes and everyone appreciated the level of coordination that AMAE has maintained with its partners. This function has mainly been carried out by AMAE's Community Liaison Officer (CLO) based in the Kukës Regional Office with strong initial support on its fundamental importance from DCA. The CLO is responsible for coordinating mine action activities with UNDP, local government, the police, military forces and other organizations operating in the

region. The CLO also tasks and monitors the MRE and VA activities of VMA and ARC in the region. An important function of the CLO is to liaise with the mine affected community, and upon completion of clearance, prepare all relevant documents for handover of cleared land to the community.

While in Kukës, the Evaluation Team heard that in some communities there is reluctance to accept cleared land as safe to use. This may be in part due to the trauma and experiences they have suffered in the mined area. But it may also indicate that not enough is being done to provide them with information about prioritisation, the clearance process and the handover process. While this does not seem to be a widespread problem, it does indicate the importance and need for a CLO to ensure greater communication and consultation with local communities before and after clearance.

Furthermore, AMAE continues to deal with the aftermath of reducing clearance teams at the end of 2006. The most vocal protestors have been from Tropojë and as the clearance teams move north it remains to be seen how this will affect clearance operations. This is another reason why AMAE should consider hiring a new Community Liaison Officer. The previous one is now the head of the Regional Council in Kukës.

RECOMMENDATION: The Evaluation Team strongly recommends that the CLO position be filled for the remainder of the program.

3.7.8 Resource Mobilisation

Donor support to the mine action programme in Albania has been solid. A summary of donor support can be found at the beginning of this report and a complete list of the donors can be found in the Annex. The donors the Evaluation Team interviewed expressed a strong satisfaction with the projects they have funded. The Evaluation Team, however, observed that even though a mine free Albania is less than three years away there was a sense that commitment from the donors to finish the job and clear the remaining landmines was not certain. With the periodic turnover in donor personnel AMAC, AMAE and UNDP needs to take the time and effort to keep them updated, informed, committed and engaged. In addition to the effective donor trips to Kukës, AMAE could also provide the donors and stakeholders with clear, concise and current reporting on achievements including what remains to be done, even if it is a small amount of land to clear and release. This type of reporting could be done on a monthly or quarterly basis.

RECOMMENDATION: It is important to continue to engage donors and the government of Albania and keep them informed on a regular basis of progress and key achievements until all known mined areas are cleared and released.

RECOMMENDATION: AMAE should provide clear and concise reports to donors and other stakeholders.

3.7.9 Institutional Capacity

AMAE is officially a project unit of the UNDP DEX Capacity Building Project. Although it was established in 1999 as the national coordination body for mine action it is not a legal entity in Albania that can employ people, open a bank account and rent space in its name to operate. Nevertheless, as described in other parts of this report,

the lack of a legal status has not hindered AMAE from developing into a well-respected and competent coordination unit. With support from UNDP and the donors AMAE has had a director and sector leaders in victim assistance and MRE. In Kukes, AMAE employs an operations officer and an IMSMA database officer. The Evaluation Team recommends the community liaison officer position be re-instated. Administrative staff in Tirana complete the AMAE staff.

It is important to acknowledge the power of intrinsic motivation and a talented and committed staff as the single biggest contributor to achieving success in capacity development. Outside experts can only support people who want to perform well. AMAE is an excellent example of a dedicated, highly-motivated group of people and there has been a significant enhancement in AMAE's capacities since 1999. AMAE excels at coordinating MRE, victim assistance, clearance, public relations and liaising with the national and local authorities. Led by a charismatic and dedicated director, AMAE has established itself as one of the most successful national mine action centres in the world.

Still, the Evaluation Team was left with some doubt about whether AMAE could succeed on its own without a UNDP Chief Technical Advisor. Tasks such as personnel and project contract management were done by the CTA and UNDP with AMAE only in a support role. Without a CTA, how would these major responsibilities be discharged? As an example, AMAE plays a critical role in maintaining donor interest in the project through periodic donor visits to Kukes, presentations in Tirana, and regular reporting. However, when the donors contribute to the programme the contracts and paperwork are completed by UNDP or with ITF and the NGO that receives the funding. As the CTA will be leaving his post at the end of September, UNDP should review the institutional mechanisms and capacity building support systems to ensure that the director of AMAE can successfully manage the transition for the duration of the programme. Continued administrative support from the UNDP country office and additional (short-term) technical support from the UNDP Bureau of Crisis Prevention and Recovery (BCPR) in New York will be required.

At the same time as AMAE will be operating without a CTA over the next 24 months, the Albania Mine Action program will be in a phase-down mode. The Evaluation Team believes that the dynamic of the programme will change soon, and that phasing down a programme is very different from building one up. The Evaluation Team recommends that the UNDP proceed with caution in eliminating the CTA position for reasons other than financial. The Albania Mine Action Programme is about to move into a new phase in which managing change in a new dynamic will be the predominate theme. With Albania on schedule to be one of the first mine action programmes to close, there are, unfortunately, no lessons available from other mine action operations. However, there are thousands of examples of other types of humanitarian aid and development programmes that have closed after many years.

RECOMMENDATION: Develop a close-out plan by June 2008 and based on the tasks to be done determine the staff needs to achieve the plan.

3.8 Capacity Building and Ownership

The two themes most often heard in Albania about the mine action program are capacity building and ownership. Both terms first appear in project documents 2002 and UNDP Completion Project funded by EC in 2003/4. While development literature from a wide variety of sources has definitions for both capacity building and

ownership, the following sections are based on how the Evaluation Team interpreted the local use of these terms.

3.8.1 Ownership

In spite of the successes achieved in victim assistance, MRE, clearing landmines and resource mobilization the ET believes the differing understandings behind the concepts of ownership and capacity building mean in the context of the Albania Mine Action Programme resulted in slower than planned progress in these two areas.

“Ownership” in Albania means the government (i.e. a ministry, the president or prime minister or another governmental body or structure) provides the leadership and political direction necessary to address the landmine problem in the country and takes full responsibility for the management of the programme. It also means the “owner” makes a substantial financial contribution to support the project. The very premise of the project from the beginning was to have the Albanian Government assume responsibility for the mine action programme, including increasing its financial contribution to the programme.

Structurally, it meant incorporating AMAE into the Ministry of Defence which is, by law, the ministry responsible for mine action since the beginning of the programme. Along with incorporating AMAE into the Ministry, ownership would be advanced when the Ministry of Defence created a budget line for mine action and increased its cash contribution to mine action, but neither of these has occurred.

To support government ownership, the GICHD and ICRC conducted a workshop in March 2006 to prepare legislation that would regulate mine action activities according to international humanitarian standards and would institutionalise the AMAC and AMAE structure.

This legislation was deemed necessary to ensure a smooth handover of the mine action programme to the government. As of May 2007, however, the status and likely fate of this legislation remains unclear. At best, the Ministry of Defence is still considering it. Alternatively, it is not perceived as a priority and the process of preparing it for presentation to and enactment by Parliament has stalled over the past year. The Evaluation Team believes the latter is closer to the current situation. AMAC has indicated more time is needed to present the bill to the Parliament and for it to move through the legislative process. Without this law, AMAE remains a project implementation unit of UNDP, without separate legal status. A law is required to incorporate AMAE as a body under the Ministry of Defence. Without the law, the future of AMAE after Albania meets its Mine Ban Treaty obligations by the end of 2009 is in doubt.

The focus on ownership of the mine action programme in Albania raised questions regarding the role of government and long-term funding requirements. Several stakeholders have identified the landmine problem as a human security issue, and governments are ultimately responsible for the security and safety of its citizens. Additionally, allowing a national government to avoid the assumption of responsibility for a country’s landmine problem may create a dangerous precedent – particularly among States Parties to the Ottawa Treaty, which clearly states that national governments are responsible for meeting treaty obligations.

The other side of the argument is that continued international funding may ensure a higher level of activity; thus, less time will be needed to complete the job. Albania provides an excellent example of this inherent trade-off. In 2006 Albania had 18 clearance teams, which could have cleared the remaining area by the end of 2007 if retained. Instead, the decision was made by all key stakeholders to reduce the number of teams to six and to ask the Government to increase its financial contribution, even though the time to finish the job would be extended by at least two years. In either scenario, Albania would meet its treaty obligations, but one of the scenarios involved a smaller financial contribution and, thus, less national ownership over the programme. Is this appropriate? UNDP and donor governments should review the question: is it better to have national ownership or to eliminate the contamination as quickly as possible, allowing the government to focus on other priorities such as public health?

3.8.2 Capacity Building

The basic focus of the capacity building efforts in the programme have been supporting AMAE and training national staff employed as deminers. The plan was for the Ministry of Defence to assume responsibility for the management of mine action, with AMAE coordinating and monitoring the different components of mine action and the deminers forming a national NGO. However, this plan was not fully realised.

While this should not be considered an obstacle to achieving mine free status, as Albania will clearly achieve this, the Evaluation Team believes there are important lessons concerning expectations and structures that can inform mine action programmes in other countries.

The two flaws in the structure and the leading sources of misunderstandings and deviations from the plan relate to the role and title of the Chief Technical Advisor. The ET was advised and observed that the CTA was more of a project manager who focused not on technical matters but on resource mobilization, planning, strategic review, institutional development and management responsibilities. The technical advisory tasks relating to operations (demining, QA/QC, MRE, Victim Assistance, national standards, etc.) were not performed directly by the incumbent CTA, but instead by the TA hired in support of clearance operations. The complete technical assistance support package included one CTA, one TA for clearance (based in Kukës) and one TA for Victim Assistance.

At the time of evaluation, one of the issues in UNDP was whether to continue the project with a CTA or let AMAE – under the leadership of its capable director – assume more responsibility. In the limited time of the evaluation, the ET viewed this as a secondary issue to the future of AMAE, national ownership, and the steady progress toward Albania becoming a mine free nation by August 2010. The decision on continuation of the CTA position could be based solely on budgetary issues without consideration of past or future contributions to the success of the programme. While the elimination of the position would reduce the budget for the UNDP/AMAE office by nearly 25%, it would also add to the number of projects the UNDP Project Officer now monitors.

Nevertheless, within the context of the mine action programme in Albania, ‘capacity-building’ has more recently tended to be defined narrowly in terms of technical capacity to clear landmines. It has not included broader institutional capacity, which is a different and more complex task. The institutional transition has been hindered

Evaluation of the Albanian Mine Action Programme

not only by the slow process for drafting national mine action law but, just as importantly, by the political situation in the country characterised by several changes of government since 1999, by the recent downsizing of the Minister of Defence, by changes of key personnel within the Ministry of Defence, and by the specific constraints of the programme as a result of the Handicap International training accident in Kukes in 2004.

More specifically, future planning for the UNDP Capacity Building programme has revolved around plans on converting six mine clearance teams into a national NGO and moving AMAE into the Ministry of Defence before the programme ends. In line with this plan, AMAE would continue to function as coordination and monitoring body but without further assistance from the presence of a CTA. Short-term technical assistance would be provided as requested through BCPR.

Although getting the Ministry of Defence to assume responsibility for the mine action programme has proven elusive, it can be said with certainty that Albanian capacity – the ability to carry out the programme strategy and work plan in a professional way – has been achieved. At an operations level, the clearance teams are very well trained and DCA has even hired several of its staff for other international programmes. Other indicators of developed capacity include:

- The AMAE director represents Albania and mine action at international fora and is very adept at public relations and engaging donors.
- The AMAE victim assistance and MRE advisor also represents Albania at international fora including the recently held conference on cluster munitions in Lima, Peru.
- The AMAE Mine action specialist was selected as an intern at the GICHD and, more recently, has taken a position with the Implementation Support Unit of the GICHD to assist with preparations for the Eighth Meeting of States Parties.
- The director of VMA has built up one of the most successful national NGOs in Albania from Kukes.

Despite these achievements in building capacity, the building of independent organisations (AMAE and a national NGO for clearance) has fallen short. The mine clearance teams are referred to as the Albanian Mine Action Organization (AMCO), but the registration process to convert AMCO into a national NGO has not begun, and a candidate has not been identified to fill the director position after two rounds of interviews.

The time and effort needed to register AMCO as a national NGO was clearly underestimated. Although the 2004 RFP for the Capacity Building project stated that UNDP would lead the effort in policy development for the national NGO over a 12-month period,² in the absence of any progress in registering AMCO by mid-2006 DCA agreed to investigate whether it could re-register in Albania as a local NGO. In May 2007, DCA notified AMAE that it had not been able to re-register as a local NGO and that it was discontinuing the effort as it was affecting the time available for managing mine clearance operations. By the time of the Evaluation Mission, it was clear to the Evaluation Team that there seemed little purpose in pursuing the

² See the table on page 24 in *RFP TSC Project NE Albania – Dec 2004*.

registration and that DCA would be the appropriate agency to manage mine clearance for the remainder of the project.

With regard to AMAE, the Parliament needs to pass a law that incorporates AMAE under the Ministry of Defence and then to hire AMAE staff as Ministry of Defence employees. The Evaluation Team found little enthusiasm from the government to incorporate AMAE into its structure. No concrete reasons were stated.

Since all indications show that the remaining minefields will be cleared by the end of 2009, the feasibility and value of moving AMAE into the Ministry of Defence is questionable for the following reasons:

- Although a bill that would authorize the move has been drafted with the help of GICHD in March 2006 and sent to the Ministry of Defence, no subsequent action has been taken and the bill still requires the approval of the Minister of Defence and the Prime Minister, then a review by Parliamentary committee staff and lawyers prior to a debate and vote in Parliament. The bill must compete with other legislative priorities and, when mine action is compared to the other priorities such as structural reform, health, law and infrastructure, it does not rate highly.
- The lack of a clearly defined mission and purpose of AMAE after the mine action program ends.
- The near certainty of lower salaries for AMAE staff as they would become Ministry of Defence employees rather than project staff paid according to UNDP policies, with the possibility that the staff would seek other employment, leaving AMAE an empty shell.
- Regardless of AMAE's status as a UNDP project implementation unit, it operates with a high degree of autonomy and is recognised by the government, donors, NGOs and the United Nations as a capable coordination unit for mine action. The Evaluation Team believes much of this would be at risk if moved to the Ministry of Defence or any other government structure at this point in the programme.
- In addition, an attempt to incorporate AMAE within the Ministry of Defence and convert AMCO into a local NGO at this late date might lead to a loss of focus on finishing the clearance job by the end of 2009.

RECOMMENDATION: It is the assessment of the Evaluation Team that with slightly more than two years remaining in the programme that the plans for government ownership of the programme and the registration of the clearance teams as a national NGO should be discontinued.

3.9 Explosive Ordnance Disposal and residual landmines after 2009

In addition to the landmine and ERW problem in the Kukës region Albania suffers from a threat of abandoned explosive ordnance (AXO) resulting from the internal turmoil in 1997 when government ammunition depots were looted and later leading to accidents. Ammunition depots contain significant amounts of old and unstable ammunition which could potentially explode and harm those living around them. When accidents occur they are referred to as "hot spots." Since 1997 the Albanian Armed Forces have cleared 15 hot spots. However, accidents continue to occur in

relation to the ammunition that people carried away with them, or additional UXO found.

The Completion Initiative 2007-2010 includes a plan to have AMAE expand its mission and assist the Ministry of Defence in addressing the problem. Ridding the country of the ammunition depots, which contain old unusable Russian and Chinese ammunition, involves NATO as destroying the depots is a requirement for joining NATO, a high priority of the government of Albania. One of the issues unresolved by the Evaluation Team was what the future role of AMAE would be in Albania's efforts to rid the country of its tens of ammunition depots or be part of its Explosive Ordnance Disposal (EOD) response to clear future hot spots. A more technical assessment is required along with a thorough assessment of how AMAE as a mine action coordination body can transfer its skills and experience to the Ministry of Defence to assist in these issues, if this is what the government of Albania desires.

3.10 Closing the mine action program

Closing down a program is the most difficult task of all. It is not easy and it is usually painful as staff morale plummets in such situations. Unlike some programs that have closes because donors stopped funding them or due to performance deficiencies, the Albanian Mine Action Program can stand tall knowing it was successful because they will leave Albania mine free, and eliminated new accidents and victims. Still, like the start-up phase, closing a programme needs a strategy and a plan. While it is beyond the scope of this evaluation to develop such a plan and strategy, the following are key issues for consideration:

- First and foremost, staff will depart for new jobs before the last mine is out of the ground. This is natural and inevitable but it is a concern because staff is needed until the end.
- The database must be finalized before closing and it must be transferred to the most appropriate ministry or entity. One criterion for identifying a location for the database would be future ease of access. The database could also be sent to the Survey Action Centre in Washington DC where it could be available on its Explorer Website.
- The equipment will need to be disposed according to donor regulations.
- The programme can close out in phases.
- The close out plan should include tasks, dates and persons responsible.
- UNDP needs to provide direction on disposing of records and documents.
- UN and other manuals should be consulted on procedures for closing a program.

4. Conclusions

The Albania Mine Action Program has several unique features. Most predominantly: all minefields can be cleared in less than three years; and there has not been a single landmine accident or casualty since 2005. This is a rare achievement for a mine affected country, and Albania should be proud that its landmine problem will be resolved soon and the people in Kukës region will feel safe again.

Another feature is the status and role of AMAE. Although AMAE is technically a UNDP Project Implementation Unit (PIU) it is recognized as the de-facto Albanian Mine Action Centre despite having no legal status. The Evaluation Team attributes this to the tireless efforts and commitment of its director Arben Braha, who has been the director from the day AMAE, was created in 1999.

Of course, none of the above could have occurred without the collaborative efforts of UNDP and the donor community who provided funding for the technical, financial and administrative support required for the program. Although 22 different governments, institutions and organizations have contributed to the mine action program, the EC and the US Department of State through the ITF have led the way. The UNDP Bureau of Crisis and Prevention have also contributed through the UN Trust Fund at key moments as well as technical assistance to AMAE.

Since 2002, the program has made steady progress in clearing landmines, assisting survivors and reducing risk through MRE. In May 2007, approximately 2,000,000 m² remain to be cleared and by the end of the year it will be down to 1,300,000 m². All 238 survivors have received medical assistance, more than 70 have been provided with socio-economic reintegration assistance, all of the amputees in need of prostheses have received one and repairs are available in Albania. MRE has reached every mine impacted village the Kukës region. Mine action and development planning are linked and the Kukës Regional Development Initiative has targeted six of the 11 mine impacted villages in Kukës district. With these achievements, the Evaluation Team can only declare the Albania Mine Action Programme a success.

Although there is less than three years remaining for the programme, there are still areas for improvement and projects that are on-going and need to be completed. Among them is the need to improve the consistency of data produced in all reports, and to ensure that the overall reporting by AMAE is more concise. With funding never certain and with Albania so close to finishing the job, it is also critical to keep the donors informed with up-to-date and accurate information.

4.1 Scenarios

We present two scenarios to move forward towards a mine free Albania.

4.1.1 Scenario A – Completing Unfinished Business

In this scenario the mine action programme would continue under its current structures and modalities.

1. Continue as is, with Direct Execution (DEX) under UNDP, however, without a chief technical advisor, beginning in January 2008.

Evaluation of the Albanian Mine Action Programme

2. Do not pursue national legislation and AMCO. National legislation to incorporate AMAE into the Ministry of Defence is not required under this option.
3. Focus on finishing the job through DCA. It is not necessary to register AMCO as a national NGO. DCA can continue as is. This would alleviate any donor concerns about direct funding to an unproven organization with no experience with financial management.
4. By August 2010, AMAE ceases to exist or changes its mission and legal status (e.g. becomes an NGO or independent government agency).
5. By August 2010, phase out AMAP. With the last mine out of the ground and with the declaration that Albania has met its obligations under the Ottawa Mine Ban Treaty the Albanian Mine Action Programme would cease to exist.

Table 11 – Scenario 1: Pros and Cons

| Pros | Cons |
|---|--|
| All structures and modalities are in place to finish the job. A transition to new structures is likely to disrupt activities and be a distraction to finishing the job. Instead Scenario A provides clear focus for completing remaining tasks. | Means back-tracking on previous intentions. The practical issues with the time needed to pass legislation that is not considered high priority for the government of Albania and the little time needed to clear the remaining mine affected areas should ease reversing course. |
| DCA has structures and capacity to finish clearance. Mine clearance since 2002 under DCA has made steady progress and can finish the job. | Uncertain future for AMAE after 2009. |
| Mine Ban Treaty (MBT) obligations will be met. Scenario A will not jeopardize the government meeting its obligations under the MBT by 2010 as required. | Could prompt low staff morale and departures. This is inevitable and should be part of the planning for the closing of the program. |
| | Donors may insist on government ownership. This must be balanced against other government priorities and an understanding of what may actually be accomplished with government ownership and finishing the job being the top priority. |

4.1.2 Scenario B – Switching Gears

1. AMAE moves to the Ministry of Defence by January 2008.
2. Only some AMAE staff remain and are paid by the MoD
3. National legislation and national standards are passed
4. AMCO registers as a national NGO (though not essential to program success)
5. By the end of 2009, the MoD decides on the future role and focus of AMAE

Evaluation of the Albanian Mine Action Programme

Table 12 – Scenario 2: Pros and Cons

| Pros | Cons |
|--|--|
| <p>AMAE finds a permanent home and new mission. The Evaluation Team was unable to obtain sufficient information and analysis to determine if this was a reasonable expectation.</p> | <p>There is not a lot of time left until the end of 2009. There are two and a half years of work remaining to clear all of the landmines. However, there is less than two years remaining of actual clearance time.</p> |
| <p>Reduces international funding requirements. With national ownership the government would make larger cash contribution to mine action. The lack of preciseness on what is expected from the government.</p> | <p>The national legislation process is lengthy. The Evaluation Team was informed it could take as long as one year for the Parliament to pass. The Ministry of Defence still needs to fully assess the draft legislation.</p> |
| <p>Mine Ban Treaty obligations will be met. Assuming that Scenario B will not delay mine clearance activities the government of Albania will meet its MBT obligations.</p> | <p>Lower salaries and job losses. Although moving to the Ministry of Defence may provide some job security government salaries are significantly lower than current salaries based on UNDP policies.</p> |
| | <p>Will create more work for AMAE during the transition phase. A newly created national NGO and a new operating structure through the Ministry of Defence are likely to affect the efficiencies gained under the present structure.</p> |
| | <p>Establishment of AMCO may draw undue concern from donors. The newly created NGO will have no record of financial management or managing a large project on its own.</p> |
| | <p>AMCO not registered and the process has not begun. While the NGO law for registration does not seem over tedious the process to register AMCO has not begun. Additionally, a programme manager has not been identified nor a board of directors, as required by law, been selected.</p> |
| | <p>Obtaining donor funding for AMAE may not be possible. How AMAE would be funded under the Ministry of Defence was not clear.</p> |

5. Recommendations

General

National legislation and registration of AMCO

1. Discontinue the plan to have national legislation and to register the mine clearance teams as a national NGO.

Support from the government of Albania

2. The government of Albania should increase its cash or in-kind contribution to the mine action programme for the final two years of the programme in areas that will fill existing funding gaps.

To AMAE

National Mine Action Standards

3. Complete the national standards and replace them with the current standards.

Clearance

4. Continue mine clearance with DCA until all contaminated area is cleared.
5. Clarify the amount of contaminated area to clear by the end of 2009 and determine whether the trend to increase the amount of clearance by 20 percent will continue and possibly impact on the target of clearing all mined area by the end of 2009.
6. Conduct an independent post clearance analysis in all 39 mine impacted villages.

Reporting

7. Introduce a standard reporting format based on IMSMA report format. This will improve AMAE's ability to better manage information recording, analysis and reporting.
8. Produce a consolidated monthly or quarterly report (a summary of all activities from other reports they receive) for all stakeholders that describes the monthly activities in clearance, MRE, victim assistance and fundraising as well as progress to date including the remaining area to be cleared. The GICHD can provide sample formats. This information is now only available in several reports based on the type of activity being reported. A concise consolidated report would also help the donors better understand the remaining problem.
9. Continue to engage donors and government to complete the clearance of all known mined areas and regularly keep them informed of progress and key achievements.

AMAE capacity

10. Ensure the AMAE IMSMA operator receives training on GIS map making skills.
11. Consider a skills analysis with AMAE staff and identify suitable post-AMAE training packages and include the cost of such training in any future funding proposals.

Planning

12. Develop a formal integrated planning tool where annual objectives are set for each component, against which achievements are measured. This will improve AMAE's capacity as a national mine action centre and improve AMAE's ability to manage mine action projects in an effective manner.

13. Complete a comprehensive detailed plan for the phase-out of the programme by June 2008.

Community liaison

14. Recruit a new Community Liaison Officer as soon as possible. As a first priority, ensure this person addresses the tensions raised by the recently unemployed deminers.
15. AMAE's Community Liaison Officer should ensure a more rigorous process of checking whether communities are using cleared land to help build confidence about the clearance process.

To AMAE and VMA

MRE

16. With no mine accidents or victims since 2005 and following a very comprehensive MRE program, review the level of MRE required in 2008-2009.
17. Scale down future MRE efforts as clearance ends and when the MRE curriculum is formally introduced in all schools. Adapt MRE messages to reassure communities that cleared land is safe for use.

Development

18. Undertake a comprehensive assessment of the socio-economic benefits and outcomes of clearance and development opportunities in Kukes.
19. Use Anti-Mine Committees and peace activists in future for broader community development and awareness-raising.
20. The only NGO working in the Kukes region is VMA. Given that complete coverage has been achieved with regards to MRE and that all mine victims and survivors have received some form of assistance, VMA is well positioned to shift its mandate to promoting broader social and economic development for all communities in the Kukes region.

To UNDP Albania

Phase out of programme

21. A comprehensive detailed plan for the phase-out of the programme should be concluded by June 2008.

IMSMA

22. Ensure that the AMAE IMSMA operator receives intensive training on IMSMA 4.0 and GIS map making skills.

Data collection

23. Work with the Ministry of Health on developing a data collection (surveillance) system for casualties from AXO accidents.

Development

24. Ensure there is sufficient funding for the second phase of the KRDI, as part of efforts to eliminate regional disparities and promote development in Kukes, particularly for areas impacted by landmines.

To the Ministry of Health

Health care for all people with disabilities

25. Finish the construction of the rehabilitation centre in Kukës Hospital and the construction of the new NOPC in Tirana, and ensure that rehabilitation and prosthesis repair services are available to everyone in Albania.
26. Ensure that landmine survivors, along with all people with disabilities in Albania, are able to access affordable services at state-run hospitals in Kukës and Tirana.

To the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs

National Strategy on People with Disabilities

27. Ensure that sufficient political and financial resources are made available for the effective implementation of the *National Strategy on People with Disabilities* including educating the general public on disability issues.

To the Ministry of Education and UNICEF

MRE curriculum

28. Review the content of MRE Curriculum to ensure accuracy and appropriateness given the target audience.
29. Ensure funding for the training of teachers on the new curriculum, and introduce the curriculum into all schools as soon as possible. Political and financial commitment is required from government to ensure that the curricula is formalised and implemented.

6. Lessons Learned

While the Albania Mine Action Programme is the basis for the lessons learned described below, the Evaluation Team considers them to be applicable in a more universal perspective as a mine action programme moves from an emergency phase to a developmental phase to completion.

6.1 General

1. A UNDP DEX can undermine building national capacity and the goal to achieve national ownership, whether governmental or non-governmental. UNDP needs to consider the long term implications of implementing mine action projects under DEX.
2. Planning for national capacity and ownership is essential in the initial emergency phase.
3. Capacity building is more than training staff and establishing standards for the technical implementation of a program. Technical capacity and institutional capacity are very different and require different plans, approaches and skills. Management, including financial and institutional capacity building is equally important and more critical for the long term sustainability of the organization or institution. It is good management that gains donor confidence more than technical capacity.
4. National capacity building takes time, patience, commitment and sustainable funding.
5. It is not essential to establish a national mine action centre for every programme. The size of the landmine problem, including its overall impact on the country and not just the region or regions where the landmines are located, should be factors in determining the structure and management of the programme. For example, if it takes three years for a national mine action centre to achieve a level where it is capable to manage the problem, and the remaining landmine problem requires just another three years, is it worth the time, effort and risk to establish the mine action centre as an autonomous agency to finish the job? At what point does striving towards a point when international advisors can be decreased or phased out become a distraction to finishing the job? At what point should the national government be held to ensuring the security of its people and required to take ownership of the mine action programme?
6. Before hiring the CTA, UNDP should determine the capacity of the national mine centre and its training needs as well as its management capacity in order to hire the most suitable candidate to fit the current needs. Globally, CTAs vary in experience and skills as well as responsibilities. A team consisting of a project manager and an operations officer as a Technical Advisor may be required to address the two very different areas of responsibility.
7. Constant fundraising and budget shortfalls eventually impacts on other areas of a program including critical thinking and analysis.
8. After defining the Exit Strategy, a detailed implementation plan is required.

9. Assisting mine-affected communities is preferable to singling out individuals for assistance.
10. After the initial medical emergency, survivors must be integrated into wider disability and community issues.
11. Socio-economic reintegration will ultimately be addressed through overall development of the community/region.
12. Real government ownership of mine action and the affects of landmines will be demonstrated through long term sustainable support for landmine survivors through government structures, policies and new laws affecting people with disabilities.
13. Giving priority to national legislation, national standards and creating local NGOs must be considered with the time needed to complete the program. Each country will be different but each programme must ask the question and decide whether government ownership and passing legislation are distractions that take time and effort away from focusing on finishing the job.

6.2 Emergency Situation

14. Long term capacity building and government ownership should be planned for during the emergency phase of a program. This may require a two-prong approach with different staff: one to implement the emergency phase and the other to plan for the long term stabilization of the program with government ownership being the primary focus.
15. Careful consideration and analysis is required in choosing which government ministry is the most appropriate for mine action. One ministry, for example, the Ministry of Defence, may be appropriate for a short term emergency but perhaps not for the long term sustainable developmental mine action program. When considering which ministry is the most appropriate, all pillars of mine action should be factored in rather than just clearance activities. Additionally, a sound reasoned choice made at the initial stages may become outdated over time as a country changes and institutions and governments evolve. Regular reviews of strategies and assumptions are required as is the boldness to change direction.

6.3 Closing the mine action program

16. Closing down a program is the most difficult task of all. It is not easy and it is usually painful as staff morale plummets in such situations. Unlike some programs that close because donors stopped funding them or the program was of poor quality and value, the Albanian Mine Action Program can stand tall and leave knowing they did the job and made Albania mine free, and reduced new accidents and victims to zero and the programme closed because it was successful. Still, like a start up, closing a program needs a strategy and a plan. While it is beyond the scope of this evaluation to develop such a plan and strategy we offer some issues that need to be addressed when closing the programme in 2009.

17. First and foremost, staff will depart for new jobs before the last mine is out of the ground. This is natural and inevitable but it is a concern because staff is needed until the end.
18. The database must be finalized before closing and it must be transferred to the most appropriate ministry or entity. One criterion for identifying a location for the database would be future ease of access. The database could also be sent to the Survey Action Centre in Washington DC where it could be available on its Explorer Website.
19. The programme can close out in phases.
20. The close out plan should include tasks, dates and persons responsible.
21. UNDP needs to provide direction on disposing of records and documents.

Annex 1: Interviews Conducted

United Nations

Mrs. Aurora Bushati, Education Project Officer, UNICEF Albania
Mr. Stefano Calabretta, Chief Technical Advisor for Mine Action, UNDP
Mrs. Gülden Türköz-Cosslett, Resident Representative, UNDP
Mr. Vladimir Malkaj, Cluster Manager / MDG Substantive Programme, UNDP
Mr. Salim Maloof, Project Manager, Kukes Regional Development Initiative, UNDP
Mr. Philip Pierce, Deputy Country Director, UNDP
Mr. Alexander Cote, Regional Director, South East Europe, Handicap International
Ms. Sara Sekkenes, Senior Program Advisor, Conflict Prevention and Recovery Team, Bureau for Crisis Prevention and Recovery - UNDP

AMAE

Mr. Arben Braha, National Program Director
Ms. Juliana Buzi, former Mine Action Specialist
Mr. Bajram Domi, Quality Management Team Leader, Kukes
Mr. Veri Dogjani, Victim Assistance and MRE Officer
Ms. Eurona Leka, Mine Action Assistant
Ms. Trendelina Corapi (Muja), IMSMA Specialist, Kukes
Mr. Sali Salihi, Operations Officer, Kukes

National Government

Mr. Maksim Bozo, Department of Hospitals, Ministry of Health
Dr. Harun Iljazi, National Prosthetic Orthotic Centre
Mr. Ndrek Ismaili, Technical Secretary (Disability Sector), National Council on Disability Issues
Mr. Petrit Karabina, Deputy Minister, Ministry of Defence and Chairman of Albania Mine Action Committee
Mr. Hysen Osmani, General Director of Local Government-Ministry of Interior
Dr. Erlehta Mato, Director, Institute of Curriculum and Standards
Ms. Merita Myftari, Local Project Coordinator, Handicap International / Advisor, Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities

Kukes Region

Mr. Izet Ademi, Project Coordinator, VMA
Mr. Shefqet Bruka, Chair of Regional Council, former AMAE Community Liaison Officer
Dr. Qamil Cenalia, Prefect of Kukes
Mr. Esat Dauti, Community Member, Golaj Village
Mr. Elmi Dauti, MRE Instructor VMA
Mrs. Rushe Dauti, Nurse, Community Based Rehabilitation Network, Nikoliq Village
Mrs. Kujtesa Gradica, Nurse, Community Based Rehabilitation Network, Vlahen Village
Mr. Omer Kiliç, Head of Project Office (Kukes), Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE)
Mr. Jonuz Kola, Executive Director, Victims of Mines Association (VMA)
Mrs. Leze Korbi, Physiotherapist, Kukes Regional Hospital
Mr. Hamdi Muhadri, Leader of Vlahen village
Mr. Avni Muhametaj, Team Leader of DCA Team No 2
Ms. Sose Mula, Anti Mine Association, Dobrone village, Has district
Mr. Agim Mula Former Leader of Dobrone village, Has district
Mr. Milaim Gazmend Muhadri, Community Member, Vlahen Village
Mr. Claus Nielsen, DanChurchAid

Evaluation of the Albanian Mine Action Programme

Ms. Eva Veble, DanChurchAid (Copenhagen)
Ms. Sabrije Qarri, Teacher and Peace Activist, Golaj School, Has district
Dr. Shkelqim Ukperaj, Golaj Commune, Has District
Dr. Ylber Vata, Director, Kukes Regional Hospital
Mr. Kujtim Xhebexhia, MRE Instructor, VMA

Donors

Ms. Dena Brownlow, Second Secretary, Embassy of the United States
Mr. Olivier Schott, Programme Manager, Delegation of the European Commission in Albania
Col. Jean Charles Spiteri, Military Attaché, Embassy of France
Gregor Sancanin, Project Manager, ITF, Slovenia

Annex 2: Documents Consulted

Albania Mine Action Executive (AMAE) Project Reports

National Mine Action Plan for Completion Fulfilling the obligations under Article 5 of the Antipersonnel Mine Ban Treaty 2007-2010, April 2007.

Albania free from mines and UXO-s by 2010 – The Albanian Mine Action Programme. Presentation to MASG, 2006.

Annual Mine Action Report for 2006 to UNDP; Support to the Completion Programme for a Mine Impact Free Albania by the end of 2006; 15 January 2007

Annual Mine Action Report for 2006 to UNDP; Capacity Building Project; 15 January 2007;

Annual Mine Action Report for 2006 to UNDP; Technical Survey and Clearance 15 January 2007; (Completed 31 May 2006)

Annual Mine Action Report for 2006 to UNDP Albanian Mine Action Program (AMAP) - Support to Landmine/UXO Survivors (DFID) and Improving Healthcare for Mine/UXO Victims in Northeast Albania (France); 15 January 2007;

Annual Report for Support to Mine Action Programme in Albania, ALB/02/001; 2004 and 2005

Albanian Mine Action Programme. Annual Reports: 2003 - 2006.

Albanian Mine Action Program (AMAP) - Capacity Building Project (March 2003 - February 2007)

Albanian Mine Action Program (AMAP) - Technical Survey Project (September 2003 - May 2006)

Albanian Mine Action Programme. Reintegration of Landmine / UXO Survivors (November 2004 / December 2005)

Improving Healthcare for Mine / UXO Victims in Northeast Albania (February 2006 - December 2006)

AMAC Work Plan 2006, 2007

AMAE Operations Annual Work Plan 2007

Draft National Mine Action Standards for Albania,

AMAE National Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs)

Night of a Thousand Dinners Final Reports, VMA-Kukes 2003 and 2005

AMAE Project Proposals

Project Proposal ALB/02/01 Mine Action Programme; UNDP, 2002; signed 7 August 2002

Proposal: Contribution to the Completion Programme for a Mine Impact Free Albania by the end of 2006; 11 August 2005, 2,570,000 Euro

Support to Coordination & Monitoring of Mine Action in Albania; proposal sent to DFID through UNDP-BCPR, December 2006; 5 months in 2007

Support to Coordination & Monitoring of Mine Action in Albania for the fulfilment of the Mine Ban Treaty Obligations, CARDS Albania; 2008-2009;

Government of Albania

Inter-ministerial Decree establishing AMAC and AMAE

Decree of Council of Ministries n.147, dated 7 March 2003, approving the UNDP Project for Capacity Building

Department of Coordination and Development, Regional Council of Kukes and UNDP Albania. Kukes MDG Regional Development Strategy: Towards a Better Future for All. 2005.

Department of Coordination and Development, Regional Council of Kukes and UNDP Albania. Kukes Region Area Based Development Programme: Towards a Better Future for All. 2005

Draft Bill to Empower and Regulate Mine Action in the Republic of Albania

Memorandum of Understanding between UNDP and the Ministry of Defence for Bi-Lateral Cooperation in the Implementation of the Albanian Mine Action Programme SIGNED 15 April 2005, valid to 31 December 2006

Memorandum of Understanding between UNDP and the Ministry of Defence for Bi-Lateral Cooperation in the Implementation of the Albanian Mine Action Programme DRAFT April 2007

Albanian Mine Action Committee (AMAC) Meeting Minutes; 1999-2006.

Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities. National Strategy on People with disabilities. September 2006

United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)

Kukes Regional Development Strategy Progress Report, 2006.

Fast Facts – Kukes Regional Development Initiative.

Kukes Regional Development Initiative (KRDI)
(January 2005 - October 2007)

2005 Progress Report– EC CARDS 2003 Programme Funded Kukës Regional Development Initiative. Community Infrastructure Project, February 2006.

Country Programming and Related Matters – Country Programme Document for Albania 2006-2010

Country Programme Action Plan 2006-2010

Country Evaluation – Albanian. Assessment of Development Results, 2002-2004.

Report on tripartite review of UNDP projects funded by the European Commission in the Kukës region, October 2005.

Other

AMAE, CARE, Demining Companies (FSD & DCA-Act), ICRC, UNICEF, VMA. Assessment on Mine Awareness, UNDP Albania – AMAP, August 2003

Bailey, Sheree. Landmine Victim Assistance in South East Europe. Landmine Monitor and Handicap International Belgium. September 2003.

Brown, Steve. The Albanian Mine Action Programme: Assessment of the Current Situation and Outline National Mine Action Strategy (2001 – 2005)

Cave, Rosy; Anthea Lawson and Andrew Sheriff. Cluster Munitions in Albania and Lao PDR – the Humanitarian and Socio-Economic Impact. UNIDIR, 2006.

DanChurch Aid. DCA Humanitarian Mine Action Programme in Albania. Annual Report 2005.

International Campaign to Ban Landmines (ICBL). Landmine Monitor Reports, Albania, 2006-2000.

Silwal Bhuvan and Melanie Reimer. Identifying the Priorities: A Rapid Rural Appraisal (RRA) of the Kukës Region Mine Affected Communities. UNDP Local governance Programme, Kukës Regional Office and AMAE. January 2005

Swart, Jab. The Albanian Mine Action Programme, Journal of Mine Action, Landmines in Eastern Europe and the Caucasus, Issue 7.2, August 2003.

UNMAS, UNDP and UNICEF. Portfolio of Mine Action Projects, 2007.

Annex 3: Timeline of Mine Action Programme in Albania

| Year | Month | Event |
|------|----------|---|
| 1999 | Apr-July | Kosovo crisis |
| | Sept-Oct | AMAC and AMAE created |
| | | AAF conducts general survey |
| | | Area re-surveyed; 120km border mined; 102 contaminated areas covering 15km ² |
| | | MRE begins with CARE International |
| | | 200 victims including 13 border police |
| | | IMAS standards adopted |
| 2000 | Feb. | Albania signs Mine Ban Treaty; obligated to clear all landmines by 2010 |
| | | RONCO, HELP, FSD conduct mine clearance |
| 2001 | | |
| 2002 | | More than 1.6 million landmine stockpile destroyed |
| | | 34 landmine survivors treated in Slovenia with ITF/DoS funding |
| | | \$100,000 from DoS for upgrade of surgical capacity at Kukes hospital |
| | | DoS funds revolving loan program for survivors |
| | | 3-year National Capacity Building program begins; CTA and 1 TA hired; |
| | | DCA begins mine clearance operations with DoS/ITF funding |
| | | More 7km ² of land released and handed over to community, leaving 8km ² to clear |
| 2003 | | DCA and FSD increase clearing capacity |
| | | Database unit established using IMSMA |
| | | Technical Survey project begins |
| | | MRE reaches all 39 impacted villages through VMA projects |
| | | Victim Assistance strategy adopted |
| | | 90% of Impact Surveys completed |
| | | First "Night of A Thousand Dinners" held sponsored by US Embassy; \$16,000 raised for survivor assistance |
| 2004 | | FSD leaves Albania |
| | | DCA HMA project funded through ITF by the governments of the US and Germany |
| | | HI awarded contract for NCC |
| | May | Accident at HI training site in Kukes kills 2 persons and injures 15 |
| | Sept-Nov | HI withdraws from Albania; UNDP re-bids contract; DCA awarded NCC contract |
| | | 424,000m ² cleared |
| | | Database unit at AMAE moves from Tirana to Kukes |
| | | UNV employed as VA advisor |
| | | 15 survivors sent to Slovenia for prosthesis |
| | | 1 technician sent to India for 2.5 year training with ICRC support |
| | | CBR nurses in 30 villages recruited and trained to follow up with medical needs of survivors |
| | | Prostheses repair shop established at Kukes hospital |
| | | AMAE director attends mine action program directors meeting in Geneva |
| | | CTA attends PM meeting in Sarajevo |
| | | AMAE director attends Nairobi Mine Ban Treaty Summit as part of Albania delegation |

Evaluation of the Albanian Mine Action Programme

| Year | Month | Event |
|------|-------|---|
| 2005 | | Through the HMA and NCC DCA projects 1.16km ² has been released, leaving 3.2km ² to be cleared |
| | | UNDP and Deputy Minister of Defence sign MOU describing GOA in-kind contributions; valid to 31 December 2006 |
| | | New NOPC proposed with ICRC support; donors sought |
| | | AMAE staff attend various international trainings as part of Capacity Building project |
| | | AMAE creates community liaison position in Kukes |
| | | KDRI is launched and project targets villages cleared of landmines |
| | | National Strategy on Disability finalized by the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs |
| | | Second "Night of a Thousand Dinners" held; \$22,000 raised for survivor assistance |
| | | French donate 50,000 Euro for medical equipment in Kukes |
| | | Rapid Rural Appraisal conducted in 8 mine affected villages to assess socio-economic reintegration needs |
| | | Only 2 accidents reported in 2005; no fatalities |
| | | AMAE identifies 467 survivors of accidents from UXO in other parts of Albania and creates database |
| | | AMAE revises and updates website www.amae.org.al . |
| | | UNIDIR conducts study on cluster munitions in Albania |
| 2006 | | 1.3km ² released leaving 2km ² to clear |
| | April | Law on implementation of Mine Ban Treaty and establishing MoD as the national authority responsible for the landmine problem passed |
| | | GICHD and ICRC assist AMAE in drafting law on institutionalising national MA structures passed |
| | | MA 2007 Portfolio prepared and launched |
| | | Ministry of Health commits to funding NPC in Tirana |
| | | GICHD helps AMAE develop national standards |
| | | CLA and others attend international training as part of capacity building project |
| | | No mine accidents in 2006 |
| | | DCA HMA project ends |
| | | Third "Night of a Thousand Dinners" held; \$16,000 raised |
| | | HIF begins 3-year program with MoE and MoH to train physiotherapists and prosthetic technicians |
| 2007 | | Goal is to clear 700,000m ² leaving 1.3km ² for 2008-2009. |

Annex 4: List of 39 villages in Kukës Region, by district

| Has | Tropoje | Kukës |
|------------|----------------|--------------|
| Cahan | Buqaj | Bardhoc |
| Dobrunë | Cerem | Bele |
| Golaj | Gegaj | Borje |
| Gajrep | Kamenice | Gjegjan |
| Helshan | Kasaj | Kolsh |
| Kishaj | Kepenek | Morinë |
| Krume | Padesh | Orgjost |
| Letaj | Papaj | Novosej |
| Myc-Has | Prush | Pakisht |
| Nikoliq | Stoberde | Shishtavec |
| Peraj | Tropoje | Zapod |
| Vlahen | Vicido | |
| Zaharisht | Zherke | |
| Zgjec | Zogaj | |

Annex 5: Donors since 1999 to the Albania's Mine Action Programme

| Donors |
|--------------------------|
| Austria |
| Canada |
| Czech Republic |
| Danida |
| DfiD |
| European Commission |
| France |
| FSD |
| Germany |
| ICRC |
| International Trust Fund |
| Luxembourg |
| Netherlands |
| Norway |
| Turkey |
| SIDA |
| SFMA |
| Switzerland |
| UNICEF |
| United States |
| DanChurchAid |
| Help |