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Community Liaison

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Warning

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Community Liaison

08.1 Introduction

08.1.1 Community Liaison is a component of the Land Mine Impact Assessment (LIAT) Programme and is essential for the communication of information to communities, identifying community priorities for demining actions and ensures confidence in the handover of demined land. Community Liaison will help make sure the community is informed of all stages of mine action processes and how they impact their lives.

08.1.2 Community Liaison is the link between the tasked mine action capacity and the communities affected by the threat, and an essential element in an integrated approach to mine action.

08.2 Scope

08.2.1 This standard specifies the minimum requirements for Community Liaison in Afghanistan.

08.3 Objectives

08.3.1 The primary objective of Community Liaison is to ensure the needs and priorities of mine/ERW-impacted communities is at the centre of planning, implementation and monitoring of mine action activities. The LIAT teams/personnel involved in CL will ensure that communities fully understand the work to be undertaken by mine action agencies, and following clearance activities, feel confident that the land released to them is safe.

08.3.2 To assist in reducing the threat posed on the community by ensuring community representation for the planning of all interventions, recording all background information gathered from and about community members and reporting it promptly to the Operations Section of the MACCA/AMAC on the appropriate form.

08.4 Assessment and Planning

08.4.1 Assessment and planning stages shall take into consideration relevant information available from the community, national databases, surveys or other mine action resources.

08.4.2 Indicators should be defined to measure changes or results produced by the project.

08.4.3 Monitoring and evaluation processes shall be designed during the planning stages.

08.5 Expected Activities and Outcomes

08.5.1 Persons working as a community liaison within the LIAT teams shall inform communities before survey, marking and clearance activities are commenced, to ensure they understand the process of the activities and are receptive to them taking place.

08.5.2 To educate community members generally of the demarcation that will be visible in the task area, and the need to avoid the task site area and its proximity to ensure their safety.

08.5.3 To conduct pre-clearance review of the mined area for providing a 'before' picture of the lands use and contribution to socio-economic development including the number of beneficiaries. This will provide a baseline data against which 'post clearance' land use will be compared.

08.5.4 To gather any relevant additional information or feedback regarding the tasked threat received from community members, and ensure it is communicated to the MACCA/AMAC and the mine action agency promptly, to facilitate operational planning.

08.5.5 To ensure that risk reduction strategies are in place to include mine/ERW field marking and that MRE/VA resources are tasked through the MACCA/AMAC.

08.5.6 To achieve completion of the task with minimum disruption to both the mine action agency and the community members.

08.5.7 To ensure that the community, on completion of clearance tasks, is confident that the land released is safe. The completion of the task should include walking with the land user or authorised representative over the cleared areas and the boundaries of the safe area. Any remaining suspect or suspended areas; both marked and unmarked shall be clearly communicated to the community and land users.

08.5.8 To gather any additional information from community members on dangerous or suspect areas and UXO sightings, document them on the relevant form, and pass them promptly to the MACCA/AMAC for their further action.

08.5.9 To ensure through post-clearance review landowners/users and the community in general remain confident that land previously released to them is safe. This post clearance review should be completed to confirm that the cleared land is being used and provide a means to compare its use to the prior conflict use, and to identify any needs hindering further development.

08.5.10 Implementation of CL shall be guided by principles established during the assessment and planning stages, but shall be responsive to the changing needs of the communities, mine action agencies and other stakeholders.

08.5.11 CL implementation shall be responsive to feedback from the monitoring and evaluation phases.

08.6 Data Collection and Reporting

08.6.1 A Community Liaison Checklist: (Annex A) shall be used by the LIAT teams to assist in the process of communication and data collection with community members and the mine action agencies. The checklist will assist the LIAT teams in ensuring data gathered from communities and for all tasks are consistent and comprehensive. All information gathered in respect of the points on the checklist should be incorporated onto the relevant forms as described below.

08.6.2 A Community Assessment Report shall be used by the LIAT teams to gain a clear understanding of the Mine/ERW threat and current situation within a community. The assessment will gather relevant information from the community that includes recent victim data, dangerous area reports, risky behaviours, and other relevant information that will assist with all mine action interventions. A copy of this report shall be given to the Task Site supervisor for his/her information, placed in the Task Dossier and provided to MRE/VA assets tasked to the community.

08.6.3 A Pre-Clearance Community Contact Record (Annex B) shall be completed in respect of each mine action task detailing the communication held with community members, and any information received prior to the deployment of the capacity to the site. This form should include details of the land user/s or his or her authorised representative and their contact details and telephone numbers if possible.

08.6.4 This form shall be given to the Task Site Supervisor for his/her information and then placed on the Task Dossier for review by Quality Assurance Officers visiting the site during the course of the task.

08.6.5 A During-Clearance Community Contact Record (Annex B) shall be commenced when work at the task site starts. This form shall record the visits to the community throughout the duration of the task. Relevant information collected during this time should be communicated verbally to the Site Supervisor promptly. Once the clearance work is finished a copy of this form shall be given to the Task Site Supervisor to place on the Task Dossier for review by Quality Assurance Officers when they visit the site to conduct QA.

08.6.6 A Post-Clearance Community Contact Record (Annex B) shall be completed once the task has been finished as required by the MACCA/AMAC. This should record that the community has been advised of the task completion and that a handover of the land will take place in the near future. Once completed both the During-Clearance and the Post-Clearance Track Sheets should be placed onto the Task Dossier for final sighting by the tasked agency and the Quality Assurance team. This should happen before the formal completion takes place to enable them to confirm there is no outstanding issue with the community in regard to the task or its area.

08.6.7 The relevant sections of the Minefield Report shall be completed relating to the Pre and Post Clearance Review of each of the mined areas. The Pre Clearance Review should be done before mine clearance is commenced at the task site, and the Post Clearance Review should be done some months following the land being released back to the landowner or land users.

08.6.8 A Community Liaison Final Clearance Certificate (Annex 8.F) shall be filled in for completed mine action tasks. This certificate, once signed off by the land user or the authorised representative and other signatories, should be placed on the Task Dossier to serve as acknowledgement that the land user or the authorised representative has been informed of the mine action that has taken place in the area, viewed the cleared area and its boundaries, and/or has been advised of any remaining suspect areas, or any suspended areas.

08.6.9 A Community Liaison Suspected Hazard Area Report (Annex 8.G and 8.G1) shall be completed when reliable information is received from the community regarding other suspect or dangerous areas within their proximity. The completed form should be passed to the MACCA/AMAC for further action, and input to the IMSMA database.

08.6.10 A UXO Tasking Request (Annex 8.H) shall be completed when information is received from the community regarding Unexploded Ordnance. This completed report should be passed immediately to the MACCA/AMAC for verification and follow up, and input to the IMSMA database.

08.6.11 A flow of Community Liaison procedures and Dangerous Area/UXO Sighting reports are to be found in Annex N.

08.7 Monitoring and Evaluation

08.7.1 Monitoring plans of LIAT projects shall be established in the planning stages.

08.7.2 Internal monitoring shall be an ongoing process throughout the duration of the project.

08.7.3 The monitoring process shall be timely in both its undertaking and feedback.

08.7.4 An internal evaluation should be conducted, and ideally an external evaluation for all LIAT projects.

08.7.5 Evaluation shall make use of the indicators identified at the planning stage of the project to measure the achievements of the project.

08.7.6 Evaluations shall be conducted in accordance with international standards and using sound procedures and methodologies to ensure validity, reliability and objectivity of results.

08.8 Accreditation, Licensing and Quality Assurance

08.8.1 Accreditation is the procedure by which an organization or persons wishing to conduct CL is formally recognized as competent and able to plan and manage CL activities safely, effectively and efficiently. The MACCA shall accredit all organizations or persons intending to work in CL before commencing implementation.

08.8.2 Licensing is the procedure by which an organization or persons carrying out CL is formally recognized as competent and able to carry out CL activities. The granting of a licence assumes that the licensed capacity will not change beyond the scope or intention of the original licence. The UN Mine Action Center for Afghanistan (MACCA) will be the license issuing body for all accredited organizations wishing to work in Afghanistan.

08.8.3 The applicant or licensee(s) shall be competent to apply the general provisions of IMAS and the specific provisions of the AMAS, including financial and insurance requirements.

08.8.4 Accreditation will only be granted to an organisation or persons carrying out CL so long as they conform to IMAS (currently in draft form for LIAT), and national standards and regulations.

08.8.5 The accreditation process will require submission of the following information:

- a) Lesson plans for courses completed in Community Liaison skills and training.
- b) The CV's of the persons employed to undertake Community Liaison detailing their skills and suitability for the work.
- c) The CV's of the trainers facilitating the training.
- d) The monitoring and evaluation plans for the Community Liaison interventions.
- e) The details of the programme objectives, resources (both physical and personnel), geographical coverage and duration of the project.

08.8.6 On successful review of the above a license will be issued in respect of those persons or the organisation, if it is dedicated to this field of work, and their planned project.

08.8.7 Additional projects will require re-submission of the information above for accreditation and issue of another license.

08.8.8 The process of Quality Control (QC) and Quality Assurance (QA) in relation to mine action is covered in Chapter 2. It shall extend to incorporate CL to the extent that both QC and QA processes will include ensuring all issues and information received from the communities in relation to the tasked area has been considered and addressed appropriately before completion date.

08.9 Personal Safety

08.9.1 Community Liaison (LIAT TL) shall attend a Landmine and UXO Safety Brief before deploying to work in mine affected areas.

08.9.2 (LIAT TL) shall make themselves familiar with the demarcation system used by the mine action agencies, and when visiting task sites obey the Site Supervisor at all times in regard to movement in the area.

08.9.3 (LIAT TL) shall not put their selves at risk, and should not feel any obligation to enter areas if they do not feel safe, in responding to requests or information from communities. It is sufficient to take a GPS reading from a known safe area and report it to the MACCA/AMAC for them to follow up.

08.10 Coordination with Other Mine Risk Education

08.10.1 As community Liaison is undertaken separately from Mine Risk Education any needs for education following an incident or identification of risky behaviours, should be passed to the relevant AMAC Office and the AMAC MRE/VA section in respected Area should take appropriate and timely action.

08.11 Additional Note

08.11.1 This AMAS Chapter does not cover any other aspect of LIAT apart from Community Liaison.

Annex A – Community Liaison Check List

Important - The following points should be raised with members of the community in respect of each SHA or MF Survey or Clearance Task and Mine Risk Education interventions.

Use this Checklist as a memory jogger when communicating with members of the community (Landowners, Community elders and leadership, those living close to the area) to ensure that all information is gathered about the task site, and the area in general, as well as to ensure that the community who will be impacted by the survey or mine clearance process, are fully informed on how to keep themselves safe. Note all discussions held should be detailed on the Pre/During/Post forms as relevant using Supplementary Pages if necessary and Assessment/Survey report form L-1.

Before the Clearance Organization Commences the Task

- a) Prior to the mine clearance company arriving at the Task Site locate the community elder, landowner(s) or responsible party for the land area. Check to see if there are MRE Community Volunteers in the community.
- b) Inform him/her of the clearance and MRE process that is to take place and get the name and contact details of the landowner from him, if not known.
- c) Advise the Community elder and volunteers and ask them to tell the community in general about the clearance activities advising them approximately how long the teams will be there, the timings of detonations, how to keep themselves safe, and to avoid the site/area involved.
- d) Ask those living close to the area to stay clear of the area, and in particular that children are kept away.
- e) Check with the community if the location of the team is likely to disrupt any aspect of their daily life routines. If yes, determine what, and advise the mine clearance contractor so they can consider how to address the issue. If necessary act as a liaison between them and the community in translating the discussions.

Once the Clearance Has Commenced

- a) Locate the landowner and take him/her and the community elder to the site and introduce them to the Site Supervisor/Team Leader. Explain the process that will take place on the land. This will be outlined in the Clearance Plan. Note the contact details and the details of the discussions held on the Pre Clearance Community Contact Sheet. Complete the Pre Clearance Review questionnaire with the landowner.
- b) Ensure that MRE/VA assets are properly introduced to the community if required and that the participation of community members including women and girls is important for safety.

Information Gathering (A Continuous Process Pre/During/Post Clearance)

- a) This information will give the LIAT teams, site operators, MRE/VA implementing organizations and MACCA/AMAC personnel a clear understanding of the Mine/ERW situation and information about the community to begin activities. This information should be included in the Task Dossier and on file with all relevant agencies working in the community. Throughout all discussions with the Landowners and Community members in the area generally should be asked:

- b) In what locations did fighting take place?
- c) Are there any strategic locations in the area? Fighting positions, checkpoints?
- d) Ask the landowner or representative (this might be the community elder if the land is public land), was he/she been present during the conflict? If so ask he or she why they believe the land area to be dangerous - what can he/she tell you about any incidents relating to this land that confirms it's dangerous (animal/civilian incidents – where, when and what happened?)
- e) If the landowner and/or community elder were not present during the occupation locate other elders who possibly were, to determine what happened in the area. Why do they think the area is dangerous?
- f) Is or has the land been used by anyone? If not, for how long has it not been used? If so, by who? And can a meeting be arranged to meet to see if they have further information.
- g) Ask the community if anyone has done any clearance in the area before now. If the answer is yes, ask who did the clearance, when it was and the type of clearance activity that took place.
- h) Consider drawing a community map involving the community members as a means to further clarify the dangerous areas and their locations. Include locations of the mosques, schools and clinics to ensure safe access to these resources.
- i) Ask about the average number of families living in the community or area to gain understanding of the impacted population.

Other Areas of Threat

- a) Ask the community if there are other areas they do not use because they suspect they are dangerous or they know them to be dangerous. If yes, ask for people who can give first hand information on these areas. Locate, interview and complete dangerous area report if you get reliable information and you believe there is a threat. If it is a UXO sighting complete the UXO sighting report and forward it immediately to the Operations Section of the AMAC.
- b) Go to a safe area to view these additional threats with informed people. Is there any physical evidence to suggest that the area is dangerous? Check in the case of UXO sightings when the last positive sighting was of the item. Some items reported may not have been sighted for some time and many activities may have taken place on the land since the last confirmed sighting. Always consider the reliability of the information you are being given.
- c) If Dangerous Area/UXO Task Reports are filed, advise community of feedback from MACCA/AMAC Ops in regard to the threat they have identified, and advise them when they have been removed or to be destroyed.

Make yourself aware of what assets (dogs, machines, manual or all?) are being used on the site for clearance and verification. Read the methodology on the task dossier so you know what is thought to be in the tasked area and the boundaries of the suspect area.

- d) Be observant of the community generally and ask questions with regards to their knowledge and consciousness of the mine/ERW problems in the area and their misconceptions. Identify the high risk groups and risky behaviours to ensure safety messages are appropriately targeted, particularly with male members of the population who are the target group in this

country. Check to see if safe solutions are already in place so that these coping mechanisms are not disrupted.

- e) Ask community how mines affect their lives. Is it productive land that is not able to produce income for families? How many are affected? What will the land be used for after clearance? Are there any other issues that prevent the land being developed as they wish apart from the presence of mines and UXO? This information should all be noted on the Pre Clearance Review.
- f) Ask about methods of communication (role of Mullah, Wakil, teachers) to ensure MRE interventions are properly and effectively communicated.
- g) Additional useful information to ask:
 - 1) Distance in time and kilometres from the main village
 - 2) What does the Community do for a living?
 - 3) Where do they collect firewood?
 - 4) Where are the main water supplies, fields and gardens?
 - 5) How many people have returned recently?
 - 6) Do the Kuchies come through this area?
 - 7) Is the community accessible all year round?
 - 8) More...**
- h) To ensure community members, landmine survivors and other people with disabilities are provided with needed information with regards to medical care and rehabilitation services information with regards to other NGOs and government services should be collected:
 - 1) NGOs working in the area to collect information about:
 - 2) Ongoing and planned assistance activities
 - 3) Additional information about the community
 - 4) Community Volunteers already active
 - 5) Kind of potential problems or constraints encountered

Medical Care Available

- a) Name of the Hospital/ Clinic/ Health Post:
- b) Kind of treatment available:
- c) Name of the Contact person:
- d) Distance from the Village:
- e) Address/ Mosque:

f) Village:

District/ Province:

Physical Rehabilitation Available

a) Name of the Hospital/ Clinic/ Health Post:

b) Kind of rehabilitation provided (prosthesis, physiotherapy):

c) Name of the Contact person:

d) Distance from the Village:

e) Address/ Mosque:

f) Village:

g) District/ Province:

Communication with the Demining Company

a) Always pass any information received from communities relating to the site to the Demining Team Leader and ask him to sign the relevant form (Pre/During/Post) confirming he has received it. Compare what the demining process is finding with what information the community has given you and if it is substantially different raise it with the MACCA/AMAC Operations for clarification on what should be done next.

