



Department
for International
Development



Clearing a path to development

The UK government's approach to landmines and explosive remnants of war in developing countries



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1. Introduction

Purpose

This policy paper sets out the UK government's priorities and principles in tackling the threat of landmines and explosive remnants of war (ERW)¹ in developing countries. This approach is based on the best available global evidence and draws on our experience of funding work in the sector for over 20 years².

The paper is primarily intended for the development and humanitarian community: our counterparts such as partner governments, donors, non-governmental organisations and multilateral agencies who are engaged daily with the challenges of landmines and ERW. It sets out the main lessons from our work on landmines and ERW, our future objectives, our priorities for country selection and how we will evaluate our programmes.

The Department for International Development (DFID) leads work for the UK government on landmines and ERW in developing countries, working closely in partnership with the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) and the Ministry of Defence (MOD).

Throughout this paper, the term 'mine action' covers work to deal with the problem of landmines and ERW. Mine action refers to activities which aim to reduce the social, economic and environmental impact of mines and explosive remnants of war (ERW) including cluster munitions³. It is not limited to de-mining (survey, mapping, marking and clearance), but covers four other major areas: mine/ERW risk education (MRE); victim assistance; stockpile destruction; and advocacy in support of the international legal instruments related to landmines and ERW and the rights of people affected by them⁴.



A DFID-funded Community Liaison Team works with children at Lelere village school to increase their awareness of the dangers posed by landmines and other explosive weapons. Lelere village, Eastern Equatoria State, South Sudan. © Sean Sutton/MAG

¹ Unexploded weapons such as artillery shells, mortars, grenades, cluster munition, bombs and rockets, abandoned improvised explosive devices (IEDs) or booby-traps left behind after an armed conflict.

² This policy paper has been informed by the WYG Mine Action Evaluation, consultation events hosted by DFID and the IOD Parc Meta Evaluation of Mine Action and Development which itself draws on a wide range of literature and evaluations from across the sector.

³ International Mine Action Standards (IMAS).

⁴ The 'Five Pillars of Mine Action' as identified in "Mine Action and Effective Coordination – The UN Inter-Agency Policy" 2005.

2. The challenge

“The presence of landmines threatens people’s lives, blocks economic development and prevents access to agricultural land in some of the world’s poorest countries. UK aid will continue to help transform the lives of millions of people to live free from the fear of landmines, to cultivate land and to build up businesses.”

Justine Greening, UK Secretary of State for International Development, November 2013

Long after a conflict finishes, landmines and ERW continue to devastate people’s lives. Around the world today, millions of people live alongside land littered by landmines, grenades, rockets and ammunition. This is a major threat to the physical safety of communities. In 2011, it was estimated that more than 4,000 people were killed or injured by landmines and ERW⁵.

The threat that landmines and ERW pose to development is even more far-reaching. Millions of people are prevented from using agricultural land and accessing essential services, such as health and education, because of landmine and ERW contamination. Their presence hampers freedom of movement, prevents the safe and voluntary return of internally displaced persons (IDPs) and refugees and obstructs the delivery of humanitarian aid.

For over 20 years, the UK has supported some of the poorest countries around the world to clear landmines and ERW after conflict. In the last three years alone, UK support has:

- removed over 70,000 landmines and ERW;
- released over 10,000 hectares of contaminated or suspected hazardous land so that people can return to their everyday lives; and
- increased the awareness of hundreds of thousands of people through mine risk education.

The problem remains immense: 59 states and six other areas are still contaminated by landmines⁶. More recent conflicts, such as those in Mali, Syria and Libya, present new challenges on a daily basis.

Re-building livelihoods in South Sudan

“We must clear more land so that we can rebuild our country.”

Kimodonge village, in Eastern Equatoria state, is surrounded by fertile land. But the farmers and their families who returned to their homes following the Comprehensive Peace Agreement faced hidden dangers when trying to re-build their lives.

Used as a military base during the Second Sudanese Civil War, it is contaminated with landmines and ERW. Knowing the land was unsafe, development agencies were unable to reach the community with assistance.

Now, UK funds are supporting the Mines Advisory Group (MAG) to clear the land around the village so that farmers and their families can create and maintain secure livelihoods. The area will soon be clear and, as one member of the community said, *“we will be able to walk with no fear”*.

⁵ Landmine Monitor 2012

⁶ Landmine Monitor 2012, p. 17

3. Our approach to mine action and development

Why fund mine action in developing countries?

The UK funds mine action in developing countries for four main reasons:

First, UK funding saves lives. Recorded casualty rates have decreased significantly over the past five years⁷ in large part due to continued donor commitment to the issue.

Second, the UK funds mine action to meet its international commitments. The UK is a State Party to the Ottawa Convention⁸, as well as the Convention on Cluster Munitions (CCM) and the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW). The UK was one of the first countries to sign the Ottawa Convention in 1999 and remains committed to working towards a world free from the humanitarian and developmental impact of landmines and cluster munitions.

Third, mine action is an essential component of building stability and enabling development to take place following a conflict. This is in line with UK policies such as the Building Stability Overseas Strategy, which outlines the UK government's approach to preventing and responding to crises in fragile and conflict-affected states, and the response to the Humanitarian Emergency Response Review, which outlines how the UK engages in humanitarian crises, including reducing vulnerability and the protection of civilians.

Fourth, the UK government has been working in the mine action sector for many years, building up considerable knowledge and experience. Hence it is one of the sectors where UK funds can have the biggest impact on development, peace and stability.

Working across the pillars of mine action

The UK's experience has shown that we are best placed to make an impact on mine affected communities when we use a range of mechanisms to affect change across the five pillars of clearance, mine risk education, stockpile destruction, victim assistance and advocacy.

The UK will continue to prioritise investments in landmine and ERW clearance and mine risk education. Where there are pressing national needs, we will also consider supporting stockpile destruction. However, the UK recognises that the pillars of mine action are often mutually supportive and so will ensure that these linkages are well-developed in country level programmes.

In the UK's experience, support and assistance to victims of landmines and ERW is best provided through broader social and economic development programmes in affected countries, rather than through targeting particular groups. The UK works to strengthen health systems in many of its partner countries, as well as mainstreaming social inclusion across its broader development interventions. In addition, the UK encourages close coordination between different mine action stakeholders to support identification and referral of survivors and their families to the relevant social and medical services.

⁷ Landmine Monitor 2012

⁸ The Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention.

In terms of advocacy, the UK's diplomatic network will continue to encourage other countries to become parties to the Oslo⁹ and Ottawa Conventions and the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW). In London and overseas, we will use bilateral and multilateral meetings to work towards this. The UK will also advocate for greater commitment from State Parties to meet their obligations with regard to victim assistance.

The importance of context

The New Deal for Engagement in Fragile States that emerged from the Fourth High Level Panel on Aid Effectiveness in Busan in 2011 puts the needs of affected states at the centre of development strategies. Like any humanitarian or development programme, it is vital that mine action programmes are designed to meet the needs of the country and the locality in which they operate. There is **no “one size fits all” approach** to tackling landmines and ERW. The priorities and focus of activities in different contexts will vary, as will the link with development and the longer-term outcomes.



A DFID funded paramedic manually clears ground surrounding an electricity pylon at the Beira power line. © The HALO Trust.

⁹ The Convention on Cluster Munitions (CCM).

Guiding principles

There is a growing body of international evidence on the best approach to tackling the threat of landmines and ERW. Our approach draws on this evidence and an evaluation of the 2010-2013 UK 'Mine Action Programme' so that we can achieve maximum impact and value for money. We have also consulted widely with the mine action community and affected countries.

Guiding principles for future UK funding:

- Landmine and ERW clearance and risk education activities are often the **first step towards stabilisation and security**, and are a fundamental **precursor to development**.
- UK aid achieves greater impact and value for money where mine action is **integrated into existing development programmes** and national peace-building and development plans.
- Decisions about which land to clear and how to use cleared land can be **politically contentious**. It is vital that these decisions are well integrated into national and local decision-making structures and plans.
- **Development does not happen automatically** once land or infrastructure is declared safe for productive use. Mine action provides the space and opportunity to build livelihoods.
- **National ownership is important**. For work to be sustainable there needs to be strong leadership and management by national governments. Donors should work closely with national authorities to integrate mine action programmes into broader development plans, tackling issues related to conflict, governance and livelihoods.
- Mine action is most effective where it takes the **different needs of women, girls, men and boys into account**. Mine action programmes should be designed and implemented in a way that takes into account the different needs, priorities, knowledge and capabilities of women, girls, men, and boys ensuring that they participate in, and benefit equally from, interventions.
- More effort needs to be invested in **monitoring and evaluating** the impact of land clearance and mine risk education to inform future programming.
- Donors can play a vital role in **encouraging and improving coordination** amongst mine action and development stakeholders to increase the impact of programmes and funding.

4. Priorities and objectives for UK mine action

The **goal** of our mine action work is to build peace and security and support development in countries affected by landmines and ERW. Our **objectives** are to:

1. support landmine and ERW clearance and risk reduction in some of the poorest countries;
2. strengthen the ability of national authorities to manage their landmine and ERW programmes; and
3. respond rapidly to emergency needs in humanitarian crises.



Mr Air and his wife Mai harvest their second crop of the year. This area was cleared by MAG, removing more than 300 cluster bombs. Khammouane Province, Lao PDR. © Sean Sutton/MAG

Objective one: Support landmine and ERW clearance and risk reduction in some of the poorest countries

A key aim of landmine and ERW clearance is to protect lives and make land safer and fit for productive use. Clearance is also critical in order to make vital infrastructure safe for use so that communities can access basic services, markets and trade routes. Risk education teaches civilians to live safely within proximity to contaminated lands while awaiting clearance and, through community liaison, supports more efficient and effective mine clearance by providing information and other support to clearance operations. Clearance operations and risk education can also be significant providers of employment within affected communities and can assist with the re-settlement and re-integration of those communities following a conflict.

We will:

- 1. Support land clearance with the greatest potential to:**
 - a. reduce injuries and death;
 - b. enhance livelihoods;
 - c. increase peace and security;
 - d. facilitate humanitarian access; and
 - e. allow the safe movement of mine affected communities.
- 2. Promote community engagement at every stage of the project cycle.**
- 3. Improve integration between mine action and broader humanitarian and development planning and operations.**
- 4. Support risk education where it is an effective way of reducing the threat of injury from landmines and ERW.**

Supporting vulnerable communities in Afghanistan

The UK has recently committed to removing all remaining landmines in Herat Province in Afghanistan over the next five years. Their presence currently affects 11,000 families placing them at risk of injury and limiting their income and employment opportunities.

This initiative is integrated into the UK's broader socio-economic development programme for Afghanistan. The land is primarily used for agriculture, which accounts for 30 per cent of Afghanistan's GDP. The economic and employment opportunities this will create form a crucial part of the UK's approach to increasing stability in Afghanistan.

Objective two: Strengthen the ability of national authorities to manage their landmine and ERW programmes

The ultimate responsibility for eradicating landmine and ERW contamination lies with national authorities in the affected countries. Helping affected states to fulfil this responsibility is important for ensuring the sustainability of mine action work, to establish the capacity for future management and to adhere to international standards and good practice. National management responsibilities include planning, prioritisation, coordination and information management as well as the victim assistance response.

Without these in place, an effective national response will be difficult to achieve. These processes should also be integrated into wider national development plans and priorities so that mine action work can be instrumental in helping vulnerable communities.

We will work with international partners to facilitate greater national ownership. We will achieve this through supporting management and implementation capacity development activities based on a careful assessment of need, demand and commitment to ensure that this support is effective in different contexts. This support will be rooted in the UK's high level political engagement with the national authorities in affected states.



Manual clearance into the mineline at Nhanchenge Cahora Bassa dam, Tete Province, Mozambique. © The HALO Trust.

Helping economic development in Mozambique

Supported by UK funds, the HALO Trust is working with Mozambique's National Demining Institute (IND) to identify and clear priority areas for mine clearance.

UK funding has made essential economic infrastructure safe for use. This has included the Cahora Bassa Dam, which provides electricity for local people and for the export market. HALO has also cleared the Maputo-Ressano Garcia power line and two railway lines. Clearing land around this infrastructure has enabled trade and improved the safety and livelihoods of many farming communities in these areas.

Objective three: Respond rapidly to emergency mine action needs in humanitarian crises

In humanitarian crises, the need for mine clearance and risk education is often paramount. This is the time when the risk of injury and death is greatest as civilians move to avoid the impacts of the crisis. Rapid assessment and clearance can help open up access for humanitarian workers, protect civilians, allow IDPs and refugees to return home safely and, eventually, enable longer-term development. Mine risk education can also be an effective and rapidly mobilised response to emergencies involving the threat of landmines and ERW and can be a precursor to a full-fledged emergency response. In addition, mine action organisations often play an important role in identifying and securing stockpiles or caches of landmines and other weapons, which could otherwise fall into the hands of local militia. Effective coordination, rapid response clearance and mine risk education can therefore make a substantial contribution to the UK's humanitarian efforts.

We will support mine action organisations to rapidly respond to humanitarian crises and ensure that UK emergency mine action is fully integrated into the broader UK crisis response.

In 2012, DFID set up a new Humanitarian Rapid Response Facility (RRF)¹⁰ to support response within 72 hours of an emergency for up to 12 weeks. A number of mine action organisations are on the register of pre-approved organisations and can be deployed quickly to assess risk and clear landmines and ERW. We will continue to review this capacity. The UK has a range of capabilities to respond to humanitarian emergencies based on need: either directly through our relief materials, or working through non-governmental organisations (NGOs), the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and multilaterals.

Clearing the remnants of conflict in Libya

Following the conflict that gripped Libya for much of 2011, the UK funded the Mines Advisory Group (MAG) to conduct a rapid assessment of the risks to civilians. They found many areas littered with landmines, grenades, rockets and ammunition. Since communities, and particularly children, were unaware of the risks posed, several accidents were reported.

With UK support, MAG and the UN Mines Action Service (UNMAS) conducted rapid ordnance disposal in priority areas, including around 16 schools. More than 100,000 remnants have been identified and destroyed. Widespread mine risk education also reduced the risk of injury.

¹⁰ For more information on the RRF please see <https://www.gov.uk/rapid-response-facility>.

5. Priority country selection

We will prioritise UK funding to countries affected by landmines and ERW where the needs are greatest. The UK will focus its resources according to the following criteria:

- levels of poverty¹¹;
- casualty rates from landmines and ERW;
- levels of landmine and ERW contamination;
- gaps in existing donor assistance;
- development potential (following mine action activity);
- commitment on the part of the host government to address the issue;
- presence and capacity of national coordination body;
- opportunities for integration into wider bilateral programming.

No single model for programming can be applied in all situations. Country programmes will be designed to meet individual country needs and priorities, and even regional needs and priorities within each country. Each country programme will have a clearly defined set of results and will be subject to a rigorous value for money assessment. The selection of implementing partners will be determined against this.

The UK government will also be ready to act quickly in humanitarian crises around the world where landmines and ERW pose a significant threat. We will draw on existing rapid response capacity through the RRF to contribute in the most effective manner. Decisions on rapid response mine action programmes will be made on the basis of need and with consideration of the following issues:

- the **humanitarian impact** (severity and impact of the event, the capacity of the affected government to respond to the event and the underlying vulnerability of the affected population);
- the **nature of the request for assistance**;
- the **actions of other donors**; and
- the wider **UK perspective**.

¹¹ For the index used please refer to DFID's Bilateral Aid Review: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/bilateral-aid-review-technical-report>

6. Value for money

Value for money (VFM) is a priority for all UK development programmes to ensure that UK taxpayers' money is adding measureable value and meeting the needs of affected people. As in all areas of UK aid spending, it is not just about the lowest cost. Partners must be able to show they possess robust processes for financial and risk management and demonstrate that they have sought to maximise VFM at all stages of their operations.

The UK aid model for defining and measuring VFM is the 3E model of effectiveness, efficiency and economy. Value for money considerations will differ depending on context. In particular, the effectiveness of mine action programmes will depend on the outcomes trying to be achieved for targeted communities. Metrics for measuring the VFM of programmes will, therefore, be outlined in country-level programme documents.



Single mother, Srie Sokmean, was trained by MAG and now works as a deminer. Chisang village, Battambang, Cambodia. © Sean Sutton/MAG

7. Monitoring and evaluation

Monitoring and evaluation are critical tools for ensuring we achieve the best value from our programmes and also to generate evidence of which approaches work best. Monitoring tools will be designed to reflect the anticipated outcomes of country programmes.

In line with UK aid commitments, we will evaluate how effective the UK's mine action programmes have been in achieving real change on the ground. This will generate lessons for future programming for the UK and the wider sector.

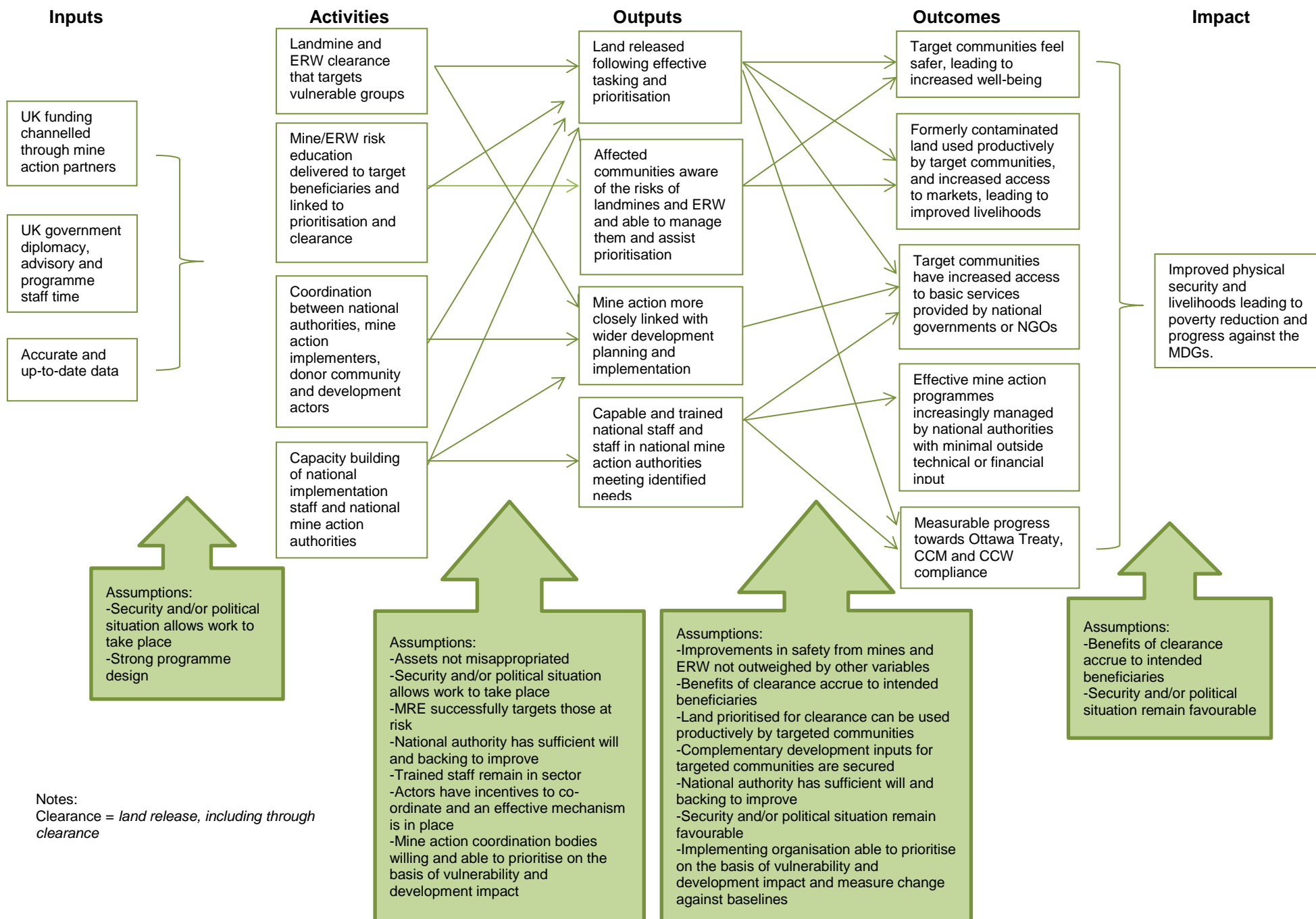
Critical issues to cover in monitoring and evaluating mine action programmes include:

- identification of baselines using sex and age disaggregated data: against which progress can be monitored on an annual basis;
- design of a monitoring strategy with the right feedback mechanisms to the programme so that activities remain on track, VFM is being achieved and lessons learned are being fed into operational plans, programme implementation and future programme design;
- identification of outcomes on beneficiaries disaggregated by age and gender;
- monitoring and evaluation visits to review progress and discuss emerging issues;
- timely evaluation of the programme to inform future policies.



MAG deminer, Santino Khamis, working to clear a bridgehead of landmines. Kimodonge Village, Eastern Equatoria State, South Sudan. © Sean Sutton/MAG

Annex 1: UK Theory of Change for Mine Action



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