

Lead Nations



Czech Republic



Lithuania

Other Contributors



Azerbaijan



Bulgaria



Denmark



Estonia



Germany



Ireland



Japan



Luxembourg



Spain



Sweden



Turkey



United States

Milestones

- August 2008 – The munitions depot at Skra, near Gori is partially destroyed.
- 5 Sep 12 – MoD request to NATO to clear Skra and additional training to EOD Company.
- 16 May 13 – Project Launch NATO PPC/EAPC.
- 29 May 2014 – Georgian Parliament ratifies legal agreement to allow the project to start. Sufficient funds (Eur 0.68M) raised to allow project to start
- 2 Sep 14 – NSPA contract signed with Delta (Georgian Govt contractor) to clear Skra in phases with support from Military EOD Company.
- 31 Oct 14 – Official Opening Ceremony at CZE Embassy in Tbilisi.
- February 2015 – Start of EOD clearance at Skra.
- October 2015 – Project review and decision to cease attempts to access the tunnels and focus on site remediation.
- 28 Aug 17 – Operational EOD Clearance completed.
- 7 Nov 17 – Official Closing Ceremony, Tbilisi.
- 24 May 19 – Project closure briefing NATO PCSC (SALW).

Financial information

- The estimated cost of the project is 1.6 MEUR over 24 months.
- Final Cost 1.145 MEUR over 36 months.

Background

The fourth NATO/PfP Trust Fund project in Georgia follows a request for assistance from Georgia to NATO to clear mines and unexploded munitions (Explosive Remnants of War (ERW)) from the partially exploded Georgian Military Ammunition Depot at SKRA and to provide additional, higher level, EOD training. The project aims are:

- Clearance of all hazards at the partially exploded Military Ammunition Depot at SKRA and return of the land to the local authority.
- Provision of specialist EOD training to an EOD Company of 66 personnel from the Georgian Army Engineer Brigade. In addition to the humanitarian demining and battle area clearance capability provided under the Georgia III Trust Fund, this will enable the Engineer Brigade to conduct more advanced ordnance disposal in conjunction with NATO allies.

Georgia has a longstanding problem with mines and unexploded ordnance (UXO) with a need to develop an organic capacity to deal with this problem. In 2008, the Georgian Government approached NATO to assist in enhancing a military EOD Company to provide Georgia with their own ERW clearance capability. Over the period 2010 – 2012, the previous Georgia III NATO Trust Fund project provided training and equipment to develop a basic capability.

Objectives and Achievements – EOD Clearance at Skra

1) Progress and Planning

This is a novel and technically high risk EOD clearance project, split into phases. Over the period September 2014 – January 2015, Delta procured specialist equipment, up-armoured earth moving equipment, recruited and trained staff and finalised operational plans ready for clearance work on site that started in February 2015. The first phase aimed to clear some of the slumped earth and try to access the tunnels. By October, the full extent of the contamination in the slumped earth and the level of effort still required to access the tunnels (if at all feasible) was better understood. Independent experts supported the view that as the tunnel entrance area was destroyed and deeply buried it would be better to seal the entrance area. The MoD agreed and therefore had no further use for the land. Discussions with the local authority on the future use of the land provided a basis for making the area safe for its future use. Clearance activity will continue with the same resources until around December 2016. The MoD (EOD Company) is providing 15 soldiers, equipment and support valued at 180,000 EUR. Donations in kind significantly reduced the project cost.

2) The Skra Depot

The military ammunition depot consisted of eight side tunnels dug into a mountainside with a main access tunnel. All the tunnels were filled military ammunition and explosives. As a result of military action during the 2008 conflict, it is assumed that the two front tunnels detonated throwing out many munitions and causing the hillside to slump down and seal off the tunnel entrance. It is anticipated that the remaining tunnels will now be filled with debris, some partially destroyed munitions, and in the rear tunnels, relatively undamaged munitions. No one had been able to access the tunnels as they are buried under some 250,000 cubic meters of rock and earth, mixed with UXO.

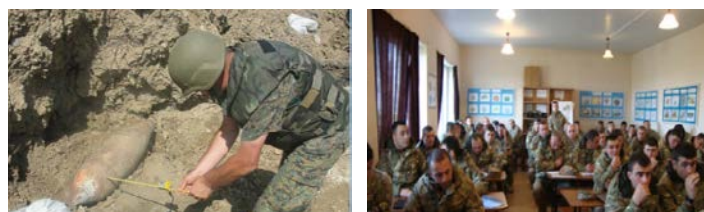


3) Outcome of the Clearance Project

From a technical perspective, the effort to clear Skra went as well as could be expected, allowing for poor weather and the discovery of the extent of the major detonation on the tunnel structure and surrounding hillside. Ultimately the tunnels could not be entered and so any remaining munitions in the rear tunnels will remain deeply buried, and judged an acceptably low risk for future land users. The slumped earth and surrounding area was cleansed of debris, and all hazardous material allowing the land to be used. During Autumn 2017, MoD and Delta completed site final domestic clean up, eg clearing the site of metal scrap, concrete debris, electric poles, levelling the ground – in order to leave the site “green and clean”, and making the site ready for transfer to the local authorities. After 30 months’ of UXO clearance, the joint effort of Delta and the EOD Company cleared over 78,000 CuM of UXO contaminated earth recovering and making safe over 2,500 items of UXO.

4) Additional EOD Training

The Georgia III Trust Fund provided training and equipment to a 66 strong Military EOD Company within the Georgian Military Engineering Brigade. The soldiers were trained to carry out demining and UXO clearance to international humanitarian standards. This project provided additional training and experience to the EOD Company through mentored employment at Skra and elsewhere, and further EOD training to selected soldiers. Over EUR 0.5M of specialist high quality equipment and 1,400 man-training days were provided to the EOD Company. Several periods of mentoring at operational sites have helped to consolidate and confirm the individual and collective skills necessary to work as an independent unit. At the end of the training and mentoring package, the EOD Company was capable of operating independently to international mine action standards. The EOD Company may now be tasked by their military operational command, either as a whole or in smaller teams, to carry out UXO and demining operations. They have their own military instructors who will assist in retaining basic skills and teaching new members of the EOD Company, but the greatest aid to retention of the capability will be their own experience of operational tasks over the coming years. The military now has the capability to clear contaminated areas allowing the local people the freedom to use the land safely.



(1) Georgian Government owned Legal Entity of Public Law – State Military Scientific-Technical Center “Delta”.

For further information

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