

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.

Financial information

- The estimated cost of the project is 1.3 MEUR over 32 months.
- Current contributions are at 1.006 MEUR

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.

The cost of the project is now estimated to be 1.3 MEUR and 32 months. The cost reduction from the original 1.6 MEUR estimate has been achieved through substantial donations in kind, notably from Georgian MoD.

Objectives and Achievements – EOD Clearance at Skra

1) Progress and Future Plans

This is a novel and technically high risk EOD clearance project, split into phases. Over the period September 2014 – January 2015, Delta¹ 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 have reduced the estimated project cost to around 1.3 MEUR. Current donations are 1.06 MEUR.

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 has been able to access the tunnels as they are buried under some 250,000 cubic meters of rock and earth, mixed with UXO.



3) Reasons for the Clearance Project

- Make the area safe for the local population and usable for the local authority.
- Remove and make safe the estimated 500 tonnes of military ammunition from the collapsed underground bunkers, which present a proliferation threat.
- Reduce the risk of an explosion of the damaged munitions which would threaten the international rail line (260m), major highway (2.4Km) and nearest village (1.6Km)



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 will provide additional training and experience to the EOD Company through mentored employment at Skra and elsewhere, and further EOD training to selected soldiers. The advanced training will be provided through a combination of military training teams missions to Georgia, participation in joint military exercises and attendance at existing EOD training schools.



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

For further information

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