Save Lives, Build Safer Futures

MAG’S STRATEGIC DIRECTION 2018-2022
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www.maginternational.org
OUR DIRECTION

SUMMARY

MAG’s STRATEGIC POSITION

THE CHANGING WORLD IN WHICH WE WORK
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WAYS OF WORKING

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During the next five years we will aim to achieve the maximum impact for the maximum number of people in the world’s most marginalised, vulnerable or forgotten communities.
SUMMARY

MAG’s vision is a safe future for women, men and children affected by violence, conflict and insecurity.

People will live in communities where their rights are upheld, with dignity and choice and free from fear from mines, explosive remnants of war (ERW) and the impact of small arms and light weapons (SALW) and ammunition.

MAG’s mission is to save lives and build safer futures.

We will use our core skills and distinctive competence to save lives through the removal of mines and ERW, and reduce the impact of SALW and ammunition on people and communities. How we do this is as important as what we do – we work primarily with and for communities, for us ‘it’s all about people’.

MAG’s ambition is to have the maximum positive impact on the maximum number of people by delivering the highest quality programmes and being the most influential mine action organisation.

We will grow the scale of our own operations responsibly and sustainably and we will transform the impact of what we do by linking our work to that of others in related fields and influencing key decision makers. We will be able to assess and measure the impact we are having.

MAG’s values are that we are principled, agile, determined, expert, professional and enabling.

When MAG works in humanitarian crises and complex emergencies we adhere to the humanitarian principles of humanity, impartiality, neutrality and independence. In contexts where our work primarily supports development, we work with authorities and other stakeholders to prioritise our efforts and resources where they will have most impact on the poorest and most vulnerable.

We will ensure that we are willing and able to act quickly, taking approaches that will deliver the best outcome, even if it is not always the easiest route. We will make sure that our work meets the highest standards. We enable others by working in partnership with those who share our aims and values.

MAG will work to achieve our mission by:

• Growing the scale of our own operations responsibly and being innovative, agile and collaborative.
• Multiplying the impact of our work by advocating, campaigning and communicating.
• Striving for a world free of mines by 2025 irrespective of how or where they were made or who used them.
• Striving for a world free from cluster munitions and where ERW do not pose a risk to communities and their safety.
• Establishing ourselves as a global leader and partner in reducing the impact of SALW and ammunition on people and communities.
• Ensuring that our values underpin the way we work by being clear that everything we do is sensitive and accountable to communities and responsive to different vulnerabilities within the societies, especially those of women and girls. We are a member of civil society and our attitudes and ways of working must reflect this.
• Ensuring that our work is sensitive to the increasingly complex dynamics of conflict.
• Working with others at all levels to maximise the impact of our work and building our reputation as a trusted partner.
• Being well managed and accountable in everything we do and the employer of choice for those in our field.
• We will be innovative, we will learn from our experience and we will be accountable and embrace constructive challenge.

MAG’s values: principled, agile, determined, expert, professional, enabling.

MINES ADVISORY GROUP
MAG’s strategy must be driven by the changing world in which we work. We must be responsive and flexible and anticipate trends and changes while keeping people and the impact of our work at the heart of what we do.

1. CHANGES IN ARMED CONFLICT AND ITS IMPACT

There has been an increase in the intensity and impact of conflict on civilians in the last decade. A trend in asymmetric conflict has been matched in many contexts by a resurgence in inter-state conflict as well as complex and regional armed conflicts. Non-state armed groups are key actors and often duty bearers in many conflicts, though they vary widely, with some adhering to extremist ideologies that do not embrace the principles and basis of humanitarian assistance. This trend has resulted in a new landmine emergency emerging, with ERW also likely to pose a risk to civilians in ever larger quantities. Many areas remain under the control of non-state armed groups and are potentially less accessible to organisations like MAG who are perceived as having a western profile. This means we will be working in more high risk and volatile environments. Humanitarian principles will be more important than ever as an enabling framework for our work, particularly as many government, humanitarian aid and security agendas overlap.

SALW and the ammunition that fuels their continued use for decades will be a significant driver of insecurity and the escalation of conflict, particularly in border areas. Their proliferation through the illicit market will only continue to have an increased impact on rule of law, development and human rights. Immediate battlefield injury and deaths are higher for men and boys but in the longer term the impact of armed conflict is felt disproportionately by women and girls. Existing inequalities are magnified and social networks break down, making sexual violence and exploitation more prevalent. Especially in post-conflict societies women have more limited access to essential services and fewer opportunities to work or earn a good wage. Those who are able to work face a double burden of paid work and unpaid domestic responsibilities. This twin expectation makes it harder to stay in school and harder to work. Women are also often excluded from decision making, either through discriminatory legal barriers or traditional practices. This makes it essential that any external actor working in post conflict society ensures that it takes into account these dynamics and addresses them either directly or indirectly. It is also vital that they enhance and promote the role, participation and voice of women and girls in all aspects of their work and programming, including in leadership and policy making and in peace and security.

2. TRENDS IN THE AID AND DEVELOPMENT SECTOR

Recent years have seen many changes in the approach of major donor governments, who continue to provide the majority of MAG’s income. Domestic pressures arising from populist political agenda, migration, or terror-related activity, have contributed to the politicisation of aid and shifts in policy. Many governments are increasingly seeking to use ODA to serve domestic interests. Negative media reports around public fundraising practices and more recently safeguarding, contribute to declining levels of trust in charities. In response, donors, governments and the public, will hold charities to greater account for delivery, and such scrutiny should be welcomed. These developments paint an uncertain future in terms of institutional funding levels and for agencies committed to making decisions based on humanitarian criteria. However, other changes also present opportunity, with some government donors focusing on issues which lie closely to NGO priorities, such as the empowerment of women and the development of stronger local capacity. Increased investment in fragile and conflict-affected states, where the ‘securityisation’ agenda is being pushed by donors, could give rise to greater levels of investment which MAG could harness to achieve greater impact.

While MAG should not be driven by donor agendas, we need to be aware of the way in which funds will be allocated and focus on the areas where they overlap with our own objectives. To remain resilient and truly independent we must invest in work to develop our non-governmental income.

3. THE FUTURE IN MAG’S CORE AREAS OF WORK

MINE ACTION

The most resounding global call in mine action is still the Maputo Declaration of 2014 that the world must be free of mines by 2025. This is an admirable ambition but to fulfil this goal would require a significant increase in the amount of funding available. It would require increased national and international engagement as well as much stronger leadership than the Mine Ban Treaty (Ottawa Treaty) and its processes currently offer. Nevertheless significant progress can and must be achieved. The path towards completion has to be described much more clearly as it raises many dilemmas and challenges. Despite this picture however, the number of mines in the world is going down in terms of long-term ‘legacy’ minefields and donors are focusing on defining and achieving tangible end states.

The mine action environment is complicated by the emergence of locally manufactured mines which are receiving increased attention from donors in the context of fragile states and security concerns. Conversely ERW resulting from new conflicts is a category which risks being under-prioritised, despite posing a continued threat to civilians.

Mine action has always been a core area of competence for MAG and we must not allow ourselves to be caught in the ‘drift to the bottom’ driven by decreasing resources and reduced quality of action. We continue to show that we can deliver real results and we must take up the challenge of reinvigorating the sector and driving momentum towards completion and responding to new emergencies.

SMALL ARMS & LIGHT WEAPONS & AMMUNITION (SALW)

SALW are responsible for hundreds of thousands of deaths annually. SALW and ammunition perpetuate conflict, violence, fear and insecurity. The last decade has seen a major increase in operational and policy activity to prevent the diversion of SALW and ammunition from state stocks to the illicit market. This has included destruction, marking, training, and development of physical infrastructure (termed by MAG as Arms Management and Destruction or AMD). The rationale for this work is clear, but the impact on people is difficult to measure directly. The Sustainable Development Goals, particularly Goal 16, offer opportunities to link to the development agenda in addition to arms control. As well as the need to demonstrate impact against a clear rationale, there is also a need to identify and overcome barriers to sustainability in SALW and ammunition assistance.

In addition, it is becoming clear that AMD could also act as an entry point for other types of programming linked to institutional accountability, confidence-building measures and safer communities. Building on a strong AMD foundation, MAG could play a valuable role in developing these areas of programming and policy. In doing so, we could have an even greater and more sustainable impact on the lives of millions of the world’s poorest people.
THE RATIONALE FOR CHANGE

The changes in the environment in which MAG works make a clear case for changing what we do and how we do it:

• Mine action’s response to contamination from legacy conflict remains a priority for 60 million people who live in fear of mines, cluster munitions and other explosive remnants of war. Funding for international assistance in many countries is shrinking faster than progress is being made.

• There is increasing acknowledgement that as ‘traditional’ mine action activities continue, there is a strong need for governments in affected states to establish a sustainable national capacity to deal with residual contamination. Planning for this needs to start well in advance of potential completion dates.

• There are new landmine emergencies, resulting from conflict in the Middle East but also Ukraine, Myanmar and parts of Africa, usually in a humanitarian crisis setting. Rapidly escalating and increased resources are available but the operating environment is increasingly complex and sensitive.

• Millions of people are negatively affected by the problem of SALW and ammunition which perpetuates their continued impact. MAG’s work to enhance accountability of national security forces and prevent diversion from state stocks has become professional and is at the forefront of the sector. Greater links to broader work with SALW initiatives, including with civil society, is essential if our work is to have greatest impact on ordinary people and be sustainable.

• We could be having much more impact if we focused attention on the needs of especially vulnerable or marginalised groups within the communities where we work and have good relationships.

• We should be more proactive in promoting and enabling the full participation and empowerment of women in all aspects of what we do.

• The issues we are dealing with are complex and our impact could be maximised by working more closely in partnerships and networks.

• Greater political will and funding is required to address contamination from legacy conflict.

• We should continue to embrace innovation, research and development, testing even more technical and non-technical solutions in our work, including in information management. This requires investment, which in turn needs diversified and independent sources of income so that we have more of our own resources which will allow us to invest where we feel we need to, not just where donors will fund us.

• MAG is growing and will grow further. Our approaches and systems need to match the scale of our current and planned work which means they will need to grow with us. We need to build a well-managed, accountable and sustainable organisation for growth in scale and influence.

MAG’S AIMS

MAG HAS FIVE AIMS:

1. We will deliver high quality, large scale, impact-driven mine action programming throughout the duration of this strategy, building on our existing expertise, profile and footprint.

2. We will become a global leader and partner in reducing the impact of small arms and light weapons and ammunition on people and communities.

3. We will ensure that our values underpin the way we work and our organisational profile. We will be sensitive to conflict and responsive to the communities with whom we work and promote the empowerment and full participation of women.

4. We will work with others – at all levels – to maximise the impact and reach of our work, building our reputation as a trusted partner.

5. We will be a well-managed, accountable and sustainable organisation.

MAG will have an impact on the lives of at least eight million people during the life of the Strategic Plan. Currently MAG has an impact on approximately one million people a year, we will grow this figure both through our own work and by working with others.

Aim 1 will continue to be proportionately the core of our work for this five-year period, with Aim 2 continuing to develop throughout. Aims 3, 4 and 5 will be constantly visible through all of our work.

In all of our programmes MAG will focus on supporting and enabling people to live in safer communities, free from fear and harm from weapons and munitions. We will do this by always designing and implementing our work based on what people affected by conflict and insecurity tell us and a secure evidence base, not our own organisational views or priorities nor those of others. We will empower the people and communities with whom we work by ensuring that they have access to information on our work and are aware of their rights in relation to safety and security.

MAG is a global organisation. We can’t work in every country which is affected by violence, conflict and insecurity but we will in as many places as we are able to have impact. We will use what we do and what we learn to inform and influence others who have decision-making authority in areas in which we have expertise.

We will build on a strengthened policy, advocacy and communication ambition to be the organisation that is recognised as the most authoritative voice on issues in which we have expertise. We will engage on issues at local, national, regional and international levels with consistency and also based on evidence and experience. We will give voice to communities and stakeholders and be recognised for the way we work in partnership, networks and with communities to enhance our impact. We will be respected for the way we organise and manage ourselves.

Working in partnership with others will achieve much more than working alone. Partnerships span a wide range of relationships from one-off agreements to long-term arrangements, at local and global levels. We recognise there will be costs to partnerships, in time, sometimes in money, but also in the need to adapt our approaches. Our choices on partnerships must be impact driven. We know that working in partnership will also mean developing different approaches and behaviours within MAG. We describe this as an ‘ecosystem culture’, thinking first of who we can work with to bring most benefit rather than what we can do ourselves.
AIM 1
We will deliver high quality, large scale, impact-driven mine action programming throughout the duration of this strategy, building on our existing expertise, profile and footprint.

Given the differing programming and operational challenges between long-term post-conflict context, where the focus is on dealing with legacy contamination and humanitarian emergencies where new use of mines and other explosive weapons presents a significant risk, this aim is divided into two sub-aims:

AIM 1A
We will work to support the clearance of mines, cluster munitions and other explosive remnants of war to reduce the number of casualties, enable long term sustainable development and support capacity development to manage residual contamination.

AIM 1B
Be the leading non-governmental organisation responding to mines and explosive remnants of war in humanitarian crises.

OBJECTIVES

1. Deliver the highest quality programming to address the legacy of mines, cluster munitions and explosive remnants of war through impact driven survey and clearance.

2. Engage with international and regional organisations, government and non-government actors to put in place plans for the sustainable national management of residual contamination and its risk.

OBJECTIVES

1. Position ourselves as the leading non-governmental organisation in responding to mines and ERW in humanitarian emergencies. We will respond to new crises wherever possible, either through direct MAG programming or by working through partner organisations.

2. Continue to be a key actor in the development of standards and procedures for responding to mines and ERW in humanitarian crises.

OBJECTIVES COMMON TO BOTH SUB-AIMS

1. Share our expertise based on programming experience within MAG and the wider sector.

2. Provide leadership to the Landmine Free 2025 campaign to support the mine action community’s collective effort to enable the maximum number of countries to become mine free by 2025.

AIM 2
We will become a global leader and partner in reducing the impact of small arms and light weapons and ammunition on people and communities.

OBJECTIVES

1. Deliver a programme of targeted support and technical assistance to relevant authorities and stakeholders, where it will reduce the risk of diversion of SALW and ammunition to the illicit market or promote accountable and transparent institutions, safer communities and rule of law.

2. Develop a clear conceptual framework and theory of change for MAG’s work with SALW and ammunition and its impact on communities affected by violence, conflict and insecurity, taking into account all relevant frameworks and in consultation with affected states, communities and other organisations and sectors.

3. Enhance advocacy at all levels to address the negative impact of SALW and ammunition and promote the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals, including through broader partnership with development stakeholders.

4. Inform debate and policy development at all levels through advocacy, promote dialogue between duty bearers and communities affected by SALW and ammunition and support the voice of civil society and affected communities at all levels.

AIM 3
We will ensure that our values underpin the way we work, our organisational profile and be sensitive to conflict and responsive to the communities with whom we work, especially women.

OBJECTIVES

1. Develop and apply a framework for ensuring that all our work in humanitarian crises is conflict sensitive and consistent with International Humanitarian Law and humanitarian principles and that MAG is seen as an independent, impartial and neutral humanitarian actor by all parties.

2. Develop and apply a framework to ensure that gender equity and in particular the needs and vulnerabilities of women are addressed within MAG’s programmes. This includes paying close attention to the participation and different needs of women, girls, boys and men; gathering, maintaining and using gender and age disaggregated data in prioritisation, and promoting the empowerment and full participation of women in all aspects of MAG’s work.

3. Develop and apply a framework to ensure that diversity, including race, ethnicity, class, disability, religion and education are considered in programmes.
AIM 4
We will work with others to maximise the impact and reach of our work, building our reputation as a partner of choice.

OBJECTIVES

1. We will expand our reach and relevance by placing greater emphasis on working in partnership, especially with organisations from the global south. These organisations will be at local, national, sub-regional, regional and international levels.

2. Become increasingly relevant, integrated and networked to the mainstream humanitarian community, recognised across national, regional and international communities for the quality of our engagement, influence and programming. This will enable more effective engagement by the international humanitarian community in contexts affected by mines and ERW.

3. Develop MAG’s framework and capacity to support the development of sustainable, national-led solutions to completion of the clearance of mines, cluster munitions and ERW.

4. Mobilise and harness greater levels of public and government support so that the needs of mine-affected communities are understood and supported by public and government donors.

5. Enhance MAG’s reputation as an authoritative policy leader on issues relevant to our work, based primarily on our experience, analysis and expertise and partnerships with organisations who share our aims and values.

AIM 5
We will be known for being a well-managed, accountable and sustainable organisation.

This aim is closely linked to the Strategic Implementation Plan and translating these objectives into tactical plans is the purpose of that document.

OBJECTIVES

1. Promote a culture within MAG which is respectful, inclusive and collaborative. This is in tune with our values and will also enable us to maximise our impact by working increasingly closely together.

2. MAG’s structure will reflect the aims set out above. The organisational structure will evolve to reflect the programme development set by the Strategic Development. It will be clear on roles, responsibilities and accountability but will be designed to enable collaboration to maximise the skills and competencies across MAG.

3. We will ensure that we manage the security and welfare of our staff as clearly and effectively as possible to ensure we meet our duty of care to all stakeholders. It will never be possible to eliminate risk but we will ensure that it is managed responsibly. Clear risk thresholds and risk appetites will be set.

4. Ensure that MAG’s profile reflects our values and the change we wish to see in relation to the communities in which we work. This includes offering employment opportunities to women in communities and developing the profile of our international staff to reflect the gender and diversity of the communities with whom we work.

5. MAG will be a dynamic, diverse and gender-balanced place to work. Through progressive and responsible employment practices we will maintain our position as an employer of choice in all locations and enable staff to develop their skills and further their careers through a structured and planned approach. We will implement a plan to promote gender balance and equity across the organisation. We will be sensitive to, and promote diversity across the organisation. Our HR systems and approach will promote effective and proactive people management and support organisational resilience where change is responsibly managed.

6. We will be fully accountable for the management of all our resources – physical, financial and personnel. This means strengthening our financial and logistics systems in the light of MAG’s recent growth to enable them to be fit for purpose for a medium-sized organisation.

7. We will adopt a standard approach to clear and transparent information management which enables knowledge to be built and to flow around the organisation. This will be linked to a new Monitoring and Evaluation framework which will underpin information gathering and dissemination.

8. We will establish and communicate a clear risk management framework. This will enable staff and others to whom we are accountable to understand MAG’s levels of risk tolerance and to measure actions against this. This will entail building an internal audit capacity.
WAYS OF WORKING

MAG will work as effectively and efficiently as possible to maximise our impact.

THE MAG GROUP
The relationship with MAG America will remain critically important to us. We will seek to improve efficiency through greater levels of integration. This will support the ongoing development of relations with the Department of State, the diversification of restricted government and trust and foundation income, together with the realisation of greater returns from public fundraising in line with MAG’s needs. As Brexit will potentially impact on our ability to influence and mobilise resources from some European sources, we will explore the potential to establish a European presence in order to mitigate this risk and maintain those income streams.

ADVOCACY
Part of achieving our greatest impact will be maintaining and developing our advocacy. We will use our experience, knowledge and voice to influence those who can have a direct impact on us, our aims and the communities with whom we work. Advocacy will include documenting and sharing our experience at all levels - globally, nationally and locally. Our advocacy work will always aim to give voice to communities, be evidence-based, linked to policy and its development and undertaken in partnership with all internal stakeholders.

COMMUNICATION
Communications can be a way of achieving an outcome or objective. MAG will actively communicate about what we do and what we think needs to happen in the world to deliver our vision and mission at all levels and across all relevant platforms.

CAMPAIGNING
MAG has a very proud history of being involved in campaigning. For the purpose of this strategy the definition of a campaign is a group of activities aimed at achieving a single aim. Where we feel that a campaign approach is the best one to deliver a particular outcome then MAG will be involved and if necessary, take a leading role.

COMMUNITY FOCUS
MAG pioneered the Community Liaison approach, which puts communities and their voice at the heart of programming. We will continue to strengthen even more on community-based approaches as a key means of designing, implementing and assessing our work.

DIRECTLY OPERATIONAL
MAG’s greatest strength is our ability to implement programmes directly on the ground. Where we feel we are the best organisation to do so and when we have the expertise and the resources we will of course continue to run our own operations as effectively and efficiently as possible. This will include, where appropriate and in line with other organisational needs and demands, exploring commercial clearance opportunities to raise surplus revenue.

IN PARTNERSHIP
MAG will work in support of and through other organisations in areas where their expertise brings value.