



Our Mine Action Programme in Ukraine

November 2024

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Table of Contents

⦿ About FSD	p.3
⦿ Where we Work	p.5
⦿ Background of FSD's Involvement in Ukraine	p.6
⦿ Our Current Mine Action Programme in Ukraine	p.8
⦿ Objectives for the Next Twelve Months	p.10
⦿ Our Funding	p.11
⦿ FSD's Expertise	p.13



Our Activities

FSD (Fondation suisse de déminage) is a Geneva-based humanitarian organisation that has been working for 26 years to protect civilians from landmines and explosive remnants of war.

Our teams locate and destroy explosive devices, conduct awareness-raising campaigns among affected populations, set up assistance projects for victims of mines or unexploded ordnance and reinforce the capacities of local authorities and NGOs.

FSD has worked in some 30 countries since its founding in 1997 and currently employs close to 900 staff on four continents.

DEMINING

The precise identification, detection and disposal of mines and unexploded ordnance is carried out by locally recruited and trained teams, sometimes assisted by specialised machines, drones and dogs.

RISK EDUCATION

In concert with our mine clearance operations, education about the dangers of explosive ordnance helps to raise awareness among the local population and prevent potentially lethal accidents.

VICTIM ASSISTANCE

FSD provides socio-economic support and facilitates access to medical care for mine/UXO accident survivors, enabling them to return to an activity compatible with their disability and helping them to support themselves and their families.

CAPACITY BUILDING

The training and mentoring of local authorities and NGOs is essential to ensure the sustainability of demining work and its ownership by the stakeholders in the concerned countries.

WEAPONS & AMMUNITION DESTRUCTION

FSD destroys obsolete or abandoned weapons and ammunition to prevent accidental explosions or their use by armed non-state actors.

ADVOCACY

FSD participates in various mine action forums and working groups, and provides support to countries in fulfilling their obligations under the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention.

OUR IMPACT IN 2023



5,733,843
m² cleared



234,850
people educated on the risks of explosive ordnance



210
mine victims supported



5,093
explosive ordnance located



5,202
weapons and ammunition destroyed



Before using their detectors, deminers have to cut high grasses to be able to start working (August 2024).



Current FSD Programmes



AFGHANISTAN

Survey · Mine clearance · Mine victim assistance



CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC

Support to the peace process · Socio-economic support to communities



COLOMBIA

Mine victim assistance



IRAQ

Survey · Mine clearance · Risk education



PHILIPPINES

Survey · Risk education · Capacity building



TAJKISTAN

Survey · Mine clearance · Risk education · Environmental remediation



UKRAINE

Survey · Mine clearance · Explosive ordnance risk education · Capacity building

Background of FSD's Involvement in Ukraine

FSD's involvement in Ukraine dates back to early 2015, in the Donbas, along the line of contact between the Ukrainian government-controlled area and the separatist-controlled area.

Our teams started by deploying emergency risk education campaigns to drastically reduce the risk of civilian casualties until clearance was completed. This was achieved by educating the affected population on how to stay safe while living near mines and unexploded ordnance. Our survey teams then began assessing the contamination caused by explosive remnants of war.

In 2016, FSD started demining work, with around 50 local staff recruited, trained and deployed from an operational base in Sloviansk. In the following years, these teams surveyed dozens of former battlefields and located hundreds of items of unexploded ordnance. In parallel, FSD supported Ukrainian institutions in establishing a national mine action authority.

At the end of February 2022, with the Russian military intervention, FSD's activities were suspended and reoriented for a few months to allow our staff to ensure the safety of their loved ones and to provide emergency humanitarian aid. In June 2022, FSD established a new operational base in Chernihiv, then another in the province of Kharkiv in November.

In 2023, FSD strengthened its operational capacities through the recruitment and training of staff and the acquisition of equipment. In 2024, two satellite operations offices were opened in Donetsk province and near Kryvyi Rih, to service the northeastern part of Kherson province.



FSD staff member training on the use of drones for non-technical surveys (July 2024).



Aerial view taken by a drone showcasing a destroyed building during non-technical survey (July 2023).



FSD

FONDATION SUISSE
DE DÉMINAGE



FSD deminer conducting an excavation task with the help of a trowel (July 2024).



FSD's Mine Action Programme in Ukraine

The ongoing conflict in Ukraine has resulted in millions of mines and unexploded ordnance littering the landscape, rendering it one of the most heavily contaminated countries in the world. It is estimated that approximately one-third of the nation is affected. These hazards pose a significant threat to civilian lives and impede humanitarian efforts, reconstruction initiatives, agricultural recovery, and the safe return of displaced people.

As of November 1, 2024, over 600 FSD staff members are actively engaged in the provinces of Chernihiv, Kharkiv, Donetsk, and Kherson.

Nineteen teams are conducting surveys of suspected hazardous areas, while twenty-eight demining teams are tasked with locating explosive devices in minefields and former battle zones. Specialised machinery is employed to prepare rural areas for clearance, and armoured construction vehicles assist in clearing rubble from structures damaged or destroyed by ordnance. Locally produced mine rollers have been certified by national authorities and are now being utilised to enhance the safety and efficiency of demining operations. Concurrently, fourteen teams are conducting risk education sessions in schools and villages, supplemented by online sessions and digital campaigns across social media platforms.

Since June 2022, FSD has cleared nearly 350,000 square meters of land, encompassing agricultural fields, village areas, towns, and critical infrastructure. During the same period, FSD teams surveyed more than 39 million square meters of land. Additionally, 232,440 individuals participated in FSD's risk education sessions, learning how to identify hidden explosive devices and adopt safe behaviours in their environments, while digital risk education campaigns on FSD social media have attained over 6 million impressions throughout the year.

Furthermore, FSD is providing logistical support and expertise to the Explosive Ordnance Disposal teams of the State Emergency Service of Ukraine, facilitating the use of 22 ground-preparation machines.





FSD team member marking the area prior to clearance operations (April 2024).

Objectives for the Next Twelve Months

1

CONSOLIDATION OF ONGOING OPERATIONS

In the final quarter of 2024, the objective is to maximize land clearance before rain, snow, mud and frozen soils disrupt demining operations. Maintaining a high operational tempo across all oblasts will ensure extensive areas are made safe for communities.

2

INCREASED USE OF DOGS AND TECHNOLOGY

In October 2024, twelve technical survey dogs started with the acclimatisation phase. FSD is currently training twelve newly recruited local handlers, with certification and deployment scheduled for early 2025.

Operational trials are planned for late 2024 for a drone equipped with ground-penetrating radar, designed to support non-technical surveys in collaboration with the FindMine project.

3

REINFORCEMENT OF LOCAL CAPACITY

A capacity-building partnership with a local mine action NGO, likely in Kharkiv province, will be established to focus on both technical and institutional aspects of humanitarian mine action. Additionally, the technical skills of FSD’s local staff will be continually reinforced through regular overseas training programs.

4

RESOURCE MOBILISATION

Ukraine remains FSD’s largest humanitarian mine action program. Despite significant efforts by FSD and other mine action organizations, the extensive contamination from mines and unexploded ordnance demands additional support. As new regions are liberated, additional tasks will arise for humanitarian deminers. FSD, supported by major institutional and private donors, aims to expand activities and operational areas to enhance impact and expedite the clearance of explosive hazards.



Our Funding

As of November 1, 2024, our mine action activities in Ukraine are supported and funded by the following donors:

- 
Switzerland
 Fully-fledged mine action programme in Kharkiv and Kherson provinces.
- 
United States of America
 Fully-fledged mine action programme in the provinces of Chernihiv and Donetsk.
- 
World Food Programme & Food and Agriculture Organisation
 Fully-fledged mine action programme focusing on small farms, up to 300 hectares, and household garden plots in Kharkiv province.
- 
Swiss Solidarity
 Capacity-building and hazard area marking project in all provinces where FSD is active.
- 
Other foundations, Swiss cantons and cities, and private donors
 General support for our programme in Ukraine.

FSD Ukraine’s operational budget for 2024 amounts to 35 million Swiss francs. Proposals are currently being examined by various institutional partners to expand our action and speed up demining in the country.



Mine clearance is a methodical task. Deminers examine the ground centimetre by centimetre (February 2024).



FSD teams provide risk education sessions to children in schools and villages (September 2024).





One of FSD's ground preparation machines working in a potentially contaminated field (May 2024).



FSD's Expertise



26 YEARS OF DEMINING OPERATIONS AND WORLD-RENOWNED EXPERTS

FSD has over 26 years of world-renowned expertise and experience in survey and demining operations, stockpile destruction, explosive ordnance risk education and victim assistance.

Our organisation implemented its first demining project in Bosnia and Herzegovina in 1998.

Since then, our deminers have cleared 1.5 million explosive devices worldwide. Our teams include several internationally recognised mine action experts who regularly contribute to key mine action publications.

FSD has designed and conducted mine clearance operations in some 30 countries since 1997, including Sudan, Laos, Iraq and Afghanistan. Several large-scale programmes involving the recruitment and on-site training of thousands of deminers have been successfully completed, including in Sri Lanka.



CONSULTING & LOCAL CAPACITY BUILDING

FSD regularly advises government institutions (currently in the Philippines and Ukraine) and helps set up demining coordination centres. Capacity-building projects are also carried out for local demining NGOs to eventually take over.



INNOVATION & TECHNOLOGIES

For years, FSD has been involved in research and development projects centred on the use of technologies in mine action. As a practical organisation active in the field, FSD is regularly consulted by universities and companies for research and development projects. FSD also assists organisations with field testing new kits. In Switzerland, FSD works closely with the Urs Endress Foundation, based in Arlesheim, and the École Polytechnique Fédérale de Lausanne (EPFL).



A STRONG PRESENCE IN UKRAINE

FSD has been active in Ukraine since 2015. Our humanitarian mine action programme is today one of the largest in Ukraine. We have recruited, trained and deployed hundreds of staff and work in close coordination with the Ukrainian authorities, local and international actors and other humanitarian mine action organisations.



More information



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