SUPPORT TO PARTNERSHIP FOR PEACE TRUST FUND PROJECTS BY THE NATO MAINTENANCE AND SUPPLY AGENCY (NAMSA) THE PROJECT IN MOLDOVA TO DESTROY MELANJ ROCKET FUEL OXIDISER

Steve Brown  
Senior Technical Advisor Partnership for Peace Projects Group—Ammunitions Sector  
NATO Maintenance and Supply Agency

Abstract  The destruction of the Moldavian stockpiles of malanj was completed in 2002 through a NAMSA project with the Netherlands as the lead nation. Private firms were invited to apply to carry out the melanj disposal and in the end the British firm John Brown was awarded the contract. This report describes the practical aspects of this melanj disposal and how it was finally completed.

1. GENERAL

In February 2001, The Netherlands Delegation at NATO Headquarters tasked NAMSA to produce a project proposal for the destruction of hazardous rocket propellant oxidizer and surplus munitions in Moldova. The Netherlands as the Lead Nation of the project subsequently accepted NAMSA’s proposal for a project lasting 14 months at a total cost of USD 1,079,000. The other contributing countries were Canada, Germany, Hungary, Luxembourg, Poland, the United Kingdom and the United States.

More than 300 tonnes of the rocket propellant oxidizer (known as melanj) were contained in leaking storage tanks and in the fuel tanks of guided missiles at a military site close to the capital, Chisinau. An international consortium headed by the British company John Brown Engineering won a contract to dispose of the Melanj and clean up the site.
The task was completed by a process of incineration in specially adapted mobile units imported from Ukraine between May and October 2002. The Ministry of the Environment and local environmental groups monitored the process closely. There were no safety or environmental problems.

The project started on 1 November 2001, with NAMSA acting as the executing agency. It was managed by NAMSA's project management, contracting and finance staff in Luxembourg assisted by an in-country team of two locally employed personnel working from an office in the Moldovan Ministry of Defence.

2. IMPLEMENTATION OF MELANJ DISPOSAL PROJECT

Implementation of the project depended on the signing of a number of agreements, as follows:

- NAMSA-Moldova Memorandum of Understanding: This was finalised in June 2001.
- Executing Agent Agreement: NAMSA and The Netherlands Delegation to NATO signed an Executing Agent Agreement to define the terms of their cooperation for the execution of this project.
- Financial Management Agreement: This agreement between the Financial Controller at NATO Headquarters and the donors had to be complete before NAMSA could start the project.

2.1 Project Start-up

The project could only start after all the agreements listed above had been finalized. The start date was 1 November 2002. The first requirement was the signing of a Cooperation Agreement between NAMSA and the Ministry of Defence and the recruitment of the in-country team. NAMSA accomplished this during a visit to Moldova on 7-10 November 2001.

2.2 Formulation of RFP

Developing a Request for Proposals (RFP) including a detailed Statement of Work for the destruction of the melanj was a high priority. Work started on this before the official start date of the project. The Statement of Work detailed the required outputs and specified the environmental and other limitations but did not specify how the contractor should do the work. The RFP was issued to 8 selected industrial sources in November 2001 with a