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Guide for the evaluation of mine action interventions

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Foreword

International standards for humanitarian demining programmes were first proposed by working groups at an international technical conference in Denmark, in July 1996. Criteria were prescribed for all aspects of demining, standards were recommended and a new universal definition of 'clearance' was agreed. In late 1996, the principles proposed in Denmark were developed by a UN-led working group and the International Standards for Humanitarian Mine Clearance Operations were developed. A first edition was issued by the UN Mine Action Service (UNMAS) in March 1997.

The scope of these original standards has since been expanded to include the other components of mine action and to reflect changes to operational procedures, practices and norms. The standards were re-developed and renamed as International Mine Action Standards (IMAS) with the first edition produced in October 2001.

The United Nations has a general responsibility for enabling and encouraging the effective management of mine action programmes, including the development and maintenance of standards. UNMAS, therefore, is the office within the United Nations responsible for the development and maintenance of IMAS. IMAS are produced with the assistance of the Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining.

The work of preparing, reviewing and revising IMAS is conducted by technical committees, with the support of international, governmental and non-governmental organisations. The latest version of each standard, together with information on the work of the technical committees, can be found at <http://www.mineactionstandards.org/>. Individual IMAS are reviewed at least every three years to reflect developing mine action norms and practices and to incorporate changes to international regulations and requirements.

Introduction

As mine action has developed over recent years there has been increased emphasis in strengthening public sector accountability for mine action, a strong commitment to promote professionalism within the sector and greater importance placed on 'results based management' of mine action. This has led to a greater awareness of the benefits of evaluations in providing objective, timely, relevant and accurate feedback on mine action interventions.

This trend has evolved to a stage where consideration of the need for evaluation is a core component of mine action planning. Additionally, many mine action clients and donors are insisting on evaluations as a component of commercial contracts and funding agreements. Evaluations are widely recognised as an important element of mine action and a stage in the project or programme cycle.

The scope of evaluation is vast. Evaluations may be carried out on a mine action policy, programme or project within a mine action programme. Evaluations may be carried out on specific aspects of mine action (Mine Risk Education, MRE, for example). In addition, evaluations may just look at the design, planning and implementation of a project or programme; or may examine all these aspects, including the post implementation impact and sustainability of the intervention.

The aim of this standard is to provide general guidelines for the preparation and conduct of mine action evaluations, and for the reporting, dissemination, and use of evaluation findings, conclusions, lessons and recommendations. It is recognised that many international agencies that commission evaluations have their own evaluation policies and guidelines. These guidelines, which draw from this experience, are not intended to change such policies and procedures.

Guide for the evaluation of mine action

1. Scope

The aim of this standard is to provide guidelines for the preparation and conduct of mine action evaluations, and for the reporting, dissemination, and use of evaluation findings, conclusions, lessons and recommendations.

2. References

A list of normative references is given in Annex A. Normative references are important documents to which reference is made in this standard and which form part of the provisions of this standard.

3. Terms, definitions and abbreviations

A complete glossary of all the terms, definitions and abbreviations used in the IMAS series of standards is given in IMAS 04.10.

In the IMAS series of standards, the words 'shall', 'should' and 'may' are used to indicate the intended degree of compliance. This use is consistent with the language used in ISO standards and guidelines:

- a) 'shall' is used to indicate requirements, methods or specifications that are to be applied in order to conform to the standard;
- b) 'should' is used to indicate the preferred requirements, methods or specifications; and
- c) 'may' is used to indicate a possible method or course of action.

The term 'National Mine Action Authority (NMAA)' refers to the government entity, often an inter-ministerial committee, in a mine-affected country charged with the responsibility for the regulation, management and coordination of mine action.

Note: In the absence of a NMAA, it may be necessary and appropriate for the UN, or some other recognised international body, to assume some or all of the responsibilities, and fulfil some or all the functions, of a MAC or, less frequently, an NMAA.

The term 'outputs' in relation to evaluation refers to the products, capital goods and services which result from a mine action intervention. Outputs may also include changes resulting from the intervention which are relevant to the achievement of outcomes (such as the development of local capacities).

The term 'outcome' in relation to evaluation refers to the likely or achieved short-term and medium-term effects of an intervention's outputs. Outcomes are related to the 'effectiveness' of an intervention.

The term 'impact' in relation to evaluation refers to the positive and negative, primary and secondary long-term effects produced by an intervention, directly or indirectly, intended or unintended. The term 'final outcome' may be substituted.

The term 'triangulation' in relation to evaluation refers to the use of multiple theories, sources or types of information, or types of analysis to verify and substantiate an assessment. The sources of information may not necessarily be people but include documents, maps, photographs, satellite imagery etc.

The term 'intervention' in relation to evaluation refers to an activity, project, programme, or policy.

4. Evaluation - general

Evaluation refers to the process of determining the 'worth or significance' of an activity, policy, project, or programme. 'Worth or significance' for mine action evaluation is assessed primarily in terms of changes in the wellbeing of people (men, women and children) in mine-affected communities, areas, and countries, as well as enhancements in local capacities to manage their own development and progress in meeting the international obligations of countries in eliminating landmines and other explosive remnants of war (ERW). The activities and direct outputs of mine action, (for example, areas cleared, people receiving Mine Risk Education (MRE), victims assisted, etc.) are also considered in evaluations, but mainly as means to promote the desired end (enhanced wellbeing of the target beneficiaries; the development of local capacities; and progress toward international obligations) – they do not themselves constitute the worth of a mine action project or programme.

There are a number of common definitions for evaluation, however one that accurately describes the evaluation process is shown below.

An evaluation is "...an assessment, as systematic and objective as possible, of an on-going or completed project, programme or policy, its design, implementation and results. The aim is to determine the relevance and fulfilment of objectives, developmental efficiency, effectiveness, impact and sustainability. An evaluation should provide information that is credible and useful, enabling the incorporation of lessons learned into the decision-making process of both recipients and donors."¹

This definition emphasises:

- a) the need for a systematic and objective approach to evaluation;
- b) the possibility of evaluating a project or programme during implementation (formative evaluation) or on completion (summative evaluation);
- c) the need to look at all stages of a project cycle from design, to implementation, to final results in order to capture a complete set of lessons that can guide further programme implementation and enhance future planning; and
- d) that evaluation results should be disseminated as widely as possible, including to donors, NMAAs, and beneficiaries of an intervention.

Evaluation is more than just the systematic gathering and processing of data. Evaluation requires the identification of critical issues, the determination of the background and motivation for decisions, an analysis of causes and effects and, in some cases, the forecasting of likely future outcomes.

5. Purpose of evaluation

The principal purposes served by evaluations are:

- a) performance improvement in terms of the outcomes or enhanced wellbeing and capacities of local people and organisations resulting from the mine action project or programme, and
- b) to enhance accountability to stakeholders (donors, NMAA, target beneficiaries, etc.).

Evaluation should endeavour to benefit multiple stakeholders, including men, women and children affected by mine action, donor agencies sponsoring mine action, the government and its supporting organs such as the NMAA and MAC, and the implementing agency and its partners.

¹ Principles for Evaluation of Development Assistance, Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development, DAC, 1991, paragraph 5.

6. Evaluation criteria

6.1. Criteria

Evaluations examine the achievement of objectives (short, mid-, and long-term) and factors such as relevance and sustainability. For mine action evaluations, the following criteria may be employed:

- a) Relevance. The extent to which the objectives of an intervention are consistent with beneficiary requirements, country needs, global priorities, and donor policies;
- b) Efficiency. A measure of how economically resources/inputs (funds, expertise, time, etc.) are converted to results (outputs and outcomes);
- c) Effectiveness. The extent to which the intervention's objectives were achieved, or are expected to be achieved, taking into account their relative importance;
- d) Impact. The positive and negative, primary and secondary long-term effects produced by an intervention, directly or indirectly, intended or unintended. The term 'final outcome' may be substituted;
- e) Sustainability. The continuation of benefits from a mine action intervention after major assistance has been completed; and
- f) Safety and quality. This relates principally to demining activities and covers whether the work was carried out safely and achieved the required standards of quality for the activity (i.e. technical survey, clearance, marking, etc.).

Of the criteria above, relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, and safety/quality are the easiest to examine. The determination of the long-term impact and sustainability of a project or programme is difficult to assess unless the evaluation is carried out at some time after the intervention has been completed.

Other common criteria that may be included for a mine action evaluation include:

- g) value-for-money (economy, efficiency, and effectiveness);
- h) cost-effectiveness (used for comparing alternative means for achieving comparable objectives);
- i) cost-benefit (used for comparing alternative means for achieving alternative objectives, whether comparable or not);
- j) client satisfaction for both men and women;
- k) beneficiary satisfaction;
- l) replicability (whether a project or programme can be replicated in a different environment); and

Note: scalability (whether a project or programme can be increased in size or 'scaled-up').

6.2. Evaluation in complex emergencies

Often mine action programmes commence during 'complex emergencies' where the needs and urgency for mine action are great, resources are limited and the rapidly changing environment makes planning difficult. Additional or alternative criteria may need to be employed in such an environment, including:

- a) Timeliness - in an emergency, vulnerable communities often cannot wait for aid;

- b) Coverage - are all the at-risk communities provided adequate assistance?
- c) Coherence - are the actions of the different international actors (humanitarian, peacekeeping, diplomats facilitating peace negotiations, etc.) mutually consistent?
- d) Co-ordination - are the various agencies making appropriate efforts to share information and to co-ordinate their actions on the ground?
- e) Protection - are adequate efforts made to protect at-risk civilians and relief workers?

7. Types of evaluation

7.1. General

Evaluations may be commissioned to examine only certain aspects of mine action interventions, or they may encompass the complete range of a project cycle and results, including the impact. The scope and scale of any evaluation is dependant on the specific requirements of the commissioning body and the timing of the evaluation. For example, an evaluation carried out while a project or programme is ongoing would not be able to examine in any detail the achievement of long-term objectives. Generally, evaluations may be broken down into four categories:

- a) performance assessments;
- b) outcome evaluations;
- c) impact evaluations; and
- d) formative evaluations.

7.2. Performance assessments

Performance Assessments Evaluations (PAEs) assess the implementation of an intervention and the degree to which the 'outputs' (deliverables) have been achieved. PAEs use criteria such as efficiency and economy and the essential requirements for mine action interventions of safety and quality. PAEs only examine a project or programme up to the stage where the outputs (cleared land, MRE etc.) reach the target beneficiaries, unless the implementing agency has been set the objective to ensure proper utilisation of outputs by the intended beneficiaries.

PAEs deal with tangible criteria, for example:

- a) Efficiency. Did the implementer use the right mix of and minimum required inputs to achieve the required outputs?
- b) Effectiveness. Did the outputs reach all the required beneficiaries?
- c) Economy. Did the implementer use the lowest costs in the provision of inputs (taking into account quality)?
- d) Safety. Were the activities that contributed to the inputs carried out safely?
- e) Quality. Were the outputs of the required quality or better?

7.3. Outcome evaluation

Outcome evaluations may assess all aspects of an intervention including whether it was well conceived and designed, and resulted in positive outcomes to the beneficiaries. Outcome evaluations may also examine sustainability.

Outcome evaluations examine intervention outputs and identify how the beneficiaries are using the outputs for socio-economic benefit (outcomes – for example the use of cleared land for growing crops or the safer behaviours resulting from MRE) or are using new capacities for improved performance.

Note: The output may vary between beneficiaries based on gender. For example, men and women may not have the same access and use of the land once it is cleared. A gender needs analysis should be conducted to ensure that outputs are benefiting men, women and children.

7.4. Impact evaluation

Impact evaluations assess the longer term consequences (planned and unintended; positive and negative) of an intervention. Impact evaluations are the most difficult to conduct as there is a requirement to assess what may happen in the future, and what would have happened without the mine action intervention. Also, with impact evaluations, and to a lesser degree with outcome evaluations, there are a number of non project or programme influences that affect the results. These factors, which include political, economic, social and cultural factors, and the performance of other projects and programmes, also have to be examined to determine the extent to which these factors have influenced the impact of the intervention being evaluated.

7.5. Formative evaluations

A formative evaluation is intended to improve performance, and is most often conducted during the implementation phase of projects or programmes. Formative evaluations are used to provide feedback to programme managers and other personnel about the project or programme components that are working and those that need to be changed.

8. Evaluation - general principles

The scope and scale of evaluations will vary across mine action interventions, however certain general principles apply:

- a) evaluations should only be conducted when there is an identified need for an independent and impartial assessment of a mine action project or programme;
- b) evaluation planning should be incorporated into the original design of an intervention. so baseline information and progress indicators are collected, providing vital evidence for evaluators;
- c) evaluation should be useful. Fundamentally, evaluation is intended to improve the planning and delivery of an intervention; it contributes to decision making and strategy formulation;
- d) where possible, evaluation should be a collaborative undertaking with participation from all stakeholders; and
- e) evaluation results should be disseminated to all stakeholders including the beneficiaries of a mine action interventions.²

9. Monitoring and audit

9.1. Monitoring

Monitoring supports evaluation by providing quantitative and qualitative data on implementation and the achievement of results. Monitoring data is of primary use to project/programme managers, but should also be compiled and maintained so it can be used by evaluators. In addition to determining compliance with a plan or procedures, monitoring may also assess:

² In some cases, the evaluation report cannot be distributed to all stakeholders because it contains confidential or commercially-sensitive information. Efforts should still be made to communicate the relevant results of the evaluation to all stakeholders – see clause 12.5.

- a) progress in implementing objectives or achieving results;
- b) compliance with standards of quality and safety;
- c) change in the environment in which the intervention is being implemented. This information will assist evaluation by indicating some of the external factors affecting an intervention; and
- d) change in the wellbeing of the beneficiaries of a project or programme, which will assist evaluation in determining effectiveness and potential impact.

Monitoring and evaluation should be considered together in the design and planning of an intervention.

9.2. Audit

Audits and evaluations are complementary functions and there is some overlap between them. An audit is an assessment of the adequacy of management controls to ensure the economical and efficient use of resources; the safeguarding of assets; the reliability of financial and other information; the compliance with regulations, rules and established policies; the effectiveness of risk management; and the adequacy of organisational structures, systems and processes.

An audit is an activity designed to assure stakeholders that operations comply with applicable statutes, regulations, standards, and norms (a compliance audit) or that agreed performance targets are being met in an economical and efficient way (performance audit). Audits focus on operations and management controls, and assess these against more-or-less explicit norms or standards (such as IMAS), whereas the scope of evaluations is broader, embracing more strategic issues, with judgements made on the basis of broad principles and criteria, and with different approaches that might be used to assess the worth of a project or programme from different perspectives.

The principal purposes served by audits are:

- a) to ensure compliance with established norms or standards (such as IMAS and an organisation's SOPs);
- b) to enhance accountability to those paying for mine action (mine action donors, financiers or prime contractors of infrastructure works, etc.); and
- c) performance improvement in terms of operations – the resource inputs and activities of a mine action project/programme and the direct outputs of mine action goods and services – in brief, 'doing the job right'.

10. Evaluation - planning considerations

10.1. General

There are a number of factors that should be considered when planning evaluations. These are discussed briefly below.

10.2. Identified need

Evaluations should only be planned when there is an identified need for an independent and impartial assessment of a mine action project or programme (or a part thereof) and there is an intent to use the evaluation findings to improve performance and accountability.

10.3. Timeliness

Evaluation results are often used for critical decisions in project or programme cycles therefore evaluations should be planned sufficiently in advance to ensure there is time to conduct, report and disseminate the results. This ensures that recommendations and lessons are available before critical decisions are made.

10.4. Harmonisation

Evaluations place significant demands on the staff of NMAAs, mine action organisations and other stakeholders. Where feasible, organisations commissioning evaluations should attempt to harmonise their evaluation plans and to undertake joint evaluations.³

10.5. Stakeholder participation

Whenever possible, beneficiaries (male and female) and other stakeholders of an intervention should participate in the planning of evaluations to foster a sense of ownership of evaluation results. Whenever appropriate, special efforts should be made to obtain the views of women and of groups who may lack opportunities to express their views.

If an evaluation requires an assessment of change in the wellbeing of beneficiaries, provision should be made for beneficiaries (or their representatives) to be consulted and, if practical, to participate in the evaluation and determine necessary follow-up actions based on the evaluation findings, recommendations, and lessons.

Evaluation planning should also permit adequate participation by donors, NMAAs, mine action organisations and other stakeholders.

10.6. Scope of evaluation

The scope of an evaluation and the issues to be evaluated should be carefully considered to ensure that the most critical issues are addressed. Evaluations should generate 'need to know' rather than 'nice to know' information.

10.7. Accountability

Plans for evaluations should address the inherent responsibility of the organisations involved to be accountable for their management of resources and the results achieved. This applies three ways:

- a) NMAAs and implementing organisations should provide an account of the results achieved to the beneficiaries in mine affected communities and areas;
- b) resource providers should be accountable to the recipient organisations for the quality of assistance in terms of:
 - (1) timeliness of the assistance;
 - (2) meeting the actual needs and priorities of the recipient organisation;
 - (3) avoidance of unnecessary restrictions and reporting requirements;
 - (4) the harmonisation of the assistance in terms of policies, procedures, planning, reporting, and reconciling with other aid agencies; and
- c) NMAAs and implementing organisations should account to the providers of resources for the management of the resources and results achieved.

³ To facilitate harmonisation, commissioning organisations should notify the GICHD so the planned evaluation can be posted on the Evaluation and Studies Calendar www.gichd.org/calendars/evaluations-and-studies-calendar/

11. Design of evaluations

11.1. General

Each evaluation shall be designed and Terms of Reference (TOR) prepared which provide detailed guidance to the evaluators on all aspects of the evaluation. Where practicable, the TOR should be developed in collaboration with the relevant stakeholders (see clause 10.4 above). The elements that should be included in the TOR are discussed below.

11.2. Context for the evaluation

An overview of the context within which the evaluation is to take place should be described, covering such topics as:

- a) background to the problem of mines and ERW, including unexploded sub-munitions;
- b) a brief history of the intervention being evaluated;
- c) relevant aspects of the environment within which the project or programme operates (social, cultural, geographic, etc., as well as the legal and policy framework);
- d) key stakeholders and the nature of their involvement;
- e) related or complementary activities (humanitarian, development, etc.) in mine affected areas
- f) achievements to date or problems encountered.

11.3. Subject of the evaluation

The subject of the evaluation (a specific project, a national mine action policy or programme, an implementing organisation, a supporting organisation, a donor policy or strategy, etc.) should be clearly stated.

11.4. Purpose of the evaluation

The purpose of the evaluation should be clearly defined. The purpose discusses the type of evaluation to be carried out (see clause 7), why the evaluation is being done (e.g. accountability and/or learning for performance improvement), how the results will be used (e.g. as input into a decision whether to continue an intervention), and who the users of the information will be.

11.5. Scope of the evaluation

The scope leads on from the 'purpose' providing the boundaries for the evaluation and linking the evaluation objectives and criteria to the particular situation. The scope will be closely linked to the type of evaluation to be carried out but should provide more specific details on the coverage of the evaluation for example, a certain time period, a phase in project or programme implementation, a geographical area, and/or the degree of stakeholder involvement.

11.6. Specific objectives and evaluation issues/questions

Evaluation objectives should be realistic and achievable in terms of the resources and budget allocated, the likely availability of data, and the data that can be collected with the time and resources allowed. The objectives of the evaluation should follow from the purpose and type of evaluation. They should be clear and agreed upon by all relevant stakeholders. Examples include:

- to ascertain results (output, outcome, impact) and assess effectiveness, efficiency, and relevance of an intervention

- to provide findings, conclusions, and recommendations to guide future policy and programming decisions

Evaluations may also be oriented by evaluation issues or questions (e.g. could comparable results have been achieved without an International Technical Advisor? or to what degree did the move to competitive contracts contribute to the project's efficiency?). These add more detail to the objectives and contribute to defining the scope.

11.7. Evaluation criteria

The evaluation criteria to be examined should be clearly defined in the TOR. For the evaluation of mine action the standard evaluation criteria are relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, impact, sustainability and, if applicable, safety and quality. However, other criteria may also be required to be examined during an evaluation. See clause 6 above.

11.8. Methodology

There is no single, best, evaluation methodology. Evaluation methods depend on the information sought, the criteria to be used in making judgments, the time available, and many other factors. The data should come from a variety of sources to ensure its accuracy, validity and reliability, and so all affected people/stakeholders are considered. Where possible, an indication of likely sources of information should be included in the TOR. Methodology should explicitly address issues of under-represented groups, for example, female headed households or persons living with disabilities.

Any limitations of the chosen evaluation methods should also be acknowledged in the TOR.

11.9. Work plan, organisation, and support matters

The TOR should provide an indicative programme for the evaluation, cover the composition of the evaluation team, gender and diversity issues and matters such as budgets, travel, security and coordination arrangements.

11.10. Reporting requirements

TOR should state the reports required to present evaluation results and any specific reporting requirements, including the timing for submission to ensure that planned deadlines can be met.

12. Implementing evaluations

12.1. Engaging and working with evaluators

Evaluations should be conducted by well-qualified teams, selected by means of a transparent process that assesses the team as a whole as well as its individual members. Team members should provide experience in the country(ies), sector(s), or technical areas addressed by the evaluation, plus experience in conducting evaluations, including the specific methodologies to be employed. Experience in emergency situations is also important when evaluating mine action programmes within countries in conflict or the immediate post-conflict period and during extreme political instability.

Whenever feasible, evaluation teams should include male and female professionals from the country(ies) or region(s) in which the evaluation is taking place.

Once the evaluators are selected, the relationship between them and the commissioning body should be characterised by mutual respect and trust. The mutual responsibilities of the parties should be set forth in a written agreement containing the TOR and the following:

- a) financial provisions;
- b) time frame;

- c) persons involved and their roles;
- d) reports and other outputs to be delivered and their content;
- e) activities to be undertaken;
- f) division of responsibilities (e.g. logistical and meeting arrangements during missions to mine affected countries);
- g) procedures to be followed; and
- h) intended use of the evaluation results, including issues of confidentiality and intellectual property rights.

Whenever possible, evaluators should be asked and given time to prepare an evaluation work plan or inception report prior to undertaking missions to confirm or, if necessary, propose adjustments to the TOR based on initial meetings, a preliminary reviews of project documents and data, the budget, security in countries to be visited, etc.

Proposed adjustments to the TOR should be discussed with the commissioning body, which should approve all agreed changes in writing.

12.2. Preparation of an evaluation work plan

The preparation of an evaluation work plan involves conducting initial interviews, file and documentary research, and preliminary analysis. The work plan requires a substantial investment in time, however a thoroughly prepared work plan can provide sufficient information to allow much of the analysis work to occur even before the field visit takes place.

Although work plans can be drafted in many ways, with emphasis on aspects particular to the type of evaluation being conducted, the following basic elements should normally be included:

- a) an overview of the design and scope of the project;
- b) analytical commentary on the historic, local, regional and national context;
- c) identification of the users of evaluation information and the implications for evaluation emphasis;
- d) analysis of the evaluation objectives and the key issues to be examined;
- e) analytical commentary on methodology and sources of information;
- f) identification of participants in the evaluation, together with a definition of roles;
- g) details on work scheduling; and
- h) details on reporting.

12.3. Conducting evaluations

Evaluations should be conducted in a professional and ethical manner, giving appropriate opportunities for the participation of all relevant stakeholders and respecting the confidentiality, and dignity of those providing information. Evaluation procedures should be realistic, diplomatic, gender- and culturally-sensitive, and reflect both cost-consciousness and respect for the time of those asked to provide information.

Evaluation findings should be well-documented and based on transparent methods that provide valid and reliable sex and age disaggregated data. Key findings should be substantiated through triangulation whenever possible.

Evaluators should ensure the honesty and integrity of the entire evaluation process. They also have a responsibility to ensure that evaluations are independent, impartial, and accurate.

Evaluators should provide maximum notice, minimise demands on time, and respect people's right to privacy.

Normally evaluators should avoid evaluating individuals except when it is essential in order to understand the background to the success or otherwise of the project.

Evaluators should offer to provide a debriefing to stakeholders toward the end of any mission to a mine-affected country. The debriefing should cover:

- a) the objectives of the evaluation;
 - b) the specific issues addressed;
 - c) the conduct of the mission (including any problems encountered and how these were addressed);
 - d) a preliminary assessment of key findings plus a description of what further work remains to be done; and
- a) an estimated date when a draft of the report, or relevant sections thereof, will be available to stakeholders for review.

12.4. Reporting

Evaluation reports should be logically structured, containing evidence-based findings, conclusions, lessons and recommendations, and should be free of information that is not relevant to the overall analysis. The report should be presented in a way that makes the information accessible and comprehensible. A reader should be able to understand:

- a) the purpose of the evaluation;
- b) exactly what was evaluated;
- c) how the evaluation was designed and conducted;
- d) what evidence was found;
- e) how the evidence was analysed;
- f) what conclusions were drawn;
- g) what recommendations were made; and
- h) what lessons were learned.

The evaluation report should contain an executive summary providing:

- a brief description of the subject being evaluated;
- the context, present situation, and description of the subject *vis-à-vis* other related matters;
- the purpose of the evaluation;
- the objectives of the evaluation;
- the intended audience of the report;

- a short description of the methodology used, including rationale for choice of methodology, data sources used, data collection and analysis methods used, and major limitations;
- the most important findings and conclusions; and
- main recommendations.

Evaluation reports should discuss, in a contextually appropriate way, those values, assumptions, theories, methods, results, and analyses that significantly affect the interpretation of the evaluative findings.

The report should describe who is involved, their roles and their contributions to the subject being evaluated, including financial resources, in-kind contributions, technical assistance, participation, staff time, training, leadership, advocacy, lobbying, and any contributions from primary stakeholders, such as communities. An attempt should be made to clarify what partners contributed to which outcome.

The evaluation report should provide an explanation of the evaluation criteria that were used by the evaluators. It also is important to make the basis of value judgments transparent. The rationale for not using a particular criterion should be explained in the report, as should any limitations in applying the criteria. Performance standards or benchmarks used should also be described.

A description of the methodology should be contained in the report to allow the user(s) to come to their own conclusions about the quality of the data. This should include:

- data sources disaggregated by sex and age;
- description of data collection methods and analysis;
- description of sampling (area and population to be represented, rationale and mechanics of selection, numbers selected, limitations to sample);
- reference indicators and benchmarks, where relevant (previous indicators, national statistics, etc.);
- evaluation team, including the involvement of individual team members;
- the evaluation plan; and
- key limitations.

Annexes should include the following:

- data collection instruments (surveys, checklists, etc.);
- the system for ensuring data quality; and
- a more detailed discussion of limitations as needed.

Reasons for accomplishments and difficulties of the subject being evaluated, especially constraining and enabling factors, should be identified. The report should not just cover a description of implementation and outcomes but include an analysis of the underlying causes, constraints, strengths on which to build, and opportunities. External factors contributing to the accomplishments and difficulties should be identified and analysed.

Evaluation team members should have an opportunity to disassociate themselves from particular judgments and recommendations. Any unresolved differences of opinion within the team should be acknowledged in the report.

Any conflict of interest, in fact or appearance, should be declared openly and fully, along with a description of the steps taken to ensure it has not affected the findings, conclusions, lessons, or recommendations. Evaluators should also report any actual or perceived conflicts of interest on the part of stakeholders or informants where these actual or perceived conflicts – if left undisclosed – could influence the findings, conclusions, lessons, or recommendations in a material fashion, or undermine the evaluation outcome.

Evaluations should be designed to allow all relevant stakeholders access to appropriate sections of the report before it is finalised. To ensure this, diversity of information channels for dissemination may need to be considered. Stakeholders should be invited to identify for correction any factual errors or material omissions in the evaluation findings, and to comment on the analysis, conclusions, lessons, and recommendations.

12.5. Dissemination

Evaluation reports should be disseminated in whole or in part, to stakeholders, and should be made available to others within the mine action community using a large variety of information dissemination methods.

Commercially sensitive information and confidential matters should be submitted separately to the commissioning body to allow the widest possible distribution of the main report. If evaluators identify credible evidence of fraud, misconduct, abuse of power, or human rights violations, they should refer the matter in confidence to the commissioning body and/or the appropriate authorities.

If the commissioning body does not wish an evaluation report to be distributed to stakeholders or, ideally, released into the public domain, consideration should be given to the release of the summary (which should then be written with this in mind). If neither the full report nor the summary is to be distributed, evaluators may prepare a standard evaluation abstract.⁴

To ensure evaluation reports are available to others who may find them useful, commissioning organisations should submit the report, summary, or abstract to the GICHD for entry into the Mine Action Research and Evaluations Reports database (www.gichd.org/links-information-database/research-and-evaluation-reports/).

13. Follow-up on evaluation recommendations

Project or programme managers should respond to the recommendations resulting from an evaluation. This may take the form of a management response, action plan and/or agreement clearly stating responsibilities and accountabilities.

Follow-up on the implementation of evaluation recommendations that have been accepted by management should then be systematically carried out. Periodic reporting on the status of the implementation of the evaluation recommendations should also be conducted and presented to the governing bodies and/or the head of the organisation.

14. Rights and obligations of the subjects of evaluations

14.1. General

NMAAs, MACs, implementing organisations, and other evaluation subjects have an obligation to account for the results achieved with the public resources (local or international) made available to them, and evaluation is a core element of the accountability cycle.

4. For guidance, see, Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation, 2005, Matrix for Writing the Evaluation Abstracts, www.sdc.admin.ch/ressources/deza_product_en_1496.doc or CIDA, (n.d.), How to Perform Evaluations: Part 9 – Model Abstracts, available at: [www.acdi-cida.gc.ca/INET/IMAGES.NSF/vLUIImages/Performancereview3/\\$file/Number_9.pdf](http://www.acdi-cida.gc.ca/INET/IMAGES.NSF/vLUIImages/Performancereview3/$file/Number_9.pdf)

Evaluation subjects have an obligation to cooperate with a team of evaluators, provided they are given adequate notice, an opportunity to review and comment upon the TOR, and to suggest additional evaluation issues or questions they would like in the TOR. Evaluation subjects have the right to expect the evaluation team gives due regard to time demands on management and staff.

14.2. Opportunities

Evaluations provide an excellent opportunity to recognise the successes achieved, making it easier to obtain continued or enhanced support from donors and the national government. Evaluations also provide an excellent opportunity for the evaluation subject(s) to explain their views to impartial evaluators on how well a project, programme, or policy was designed, what unforeseen events have occurred that create implementation problems or opportunities, and the changes they recommend for performance improvements.

Evaluation subjects can make the most of these opportunities by:

- a) putting in place a sound system for monitoring progress toward the planned objectives (outputs, outcomes, and impact);
- b) documenting problems encountered during implementation and the steps taken to resolve these;
- c) providing constructive criticism on the draft terms of reference for the evaluation to ensure the most critical issues from their perspective are included;
- d) being well prepared for the evaluation mission itself; and
- e) providing constructive criticism on the draft evaluation report.

15. Responsibilities

15.1. United Nations

Where the UN is acting on behalf of the NMAA or supporting NMAA/MAC in the development of national mine action capacity, the UN should ensure periodic (e.g. tri-annual), independent evaluation of the programme or projects supported to ensure that national ownership is being achieved.

Where applicable, the UN shall ensure that results of evaluations are disseminated and made available to the stakeholders and that action is taken on the recommendations and lessons learned from the evaluation.

15.2. National Mine Action Authority (NMAA)

The NMAA or the organisation acting on its behalf should:

- a) encourage the evaluation of mine action programmes and projects and ensure that mine action organisations have made provisions for project evaluations;
- b) ensure that evaluations benefit multiple stakeholders, including communities affected by mine action, donor agencies sponsoring mine action, the government and its supporting organs such as the NMAA and MAC, and the implementing agencies.
- c) evaluate its own activities as part of the national mine action plan;
- d) facilitate the exchange of information by distributing evaluation reports and lessons learned to among other mine action organisations and other relevant stakeholders, such as the national government and donors, ensuring no breach of confidentiality occurs. It may compile results and disseminate these as 'lessons learned'; and

- e) ensure that action is taken on the findings of evaluations.

15.3. Mine action organisations

The organisations implementing mine action projects;

- a) should evaluate their own progress against the objectives and should evaluate the outcomes and, where feasible, the impact of their intervention in a gender inclusive manner for men and women. They should adequately plan for evaluations and make available the necessary resources required;
- b) should ensure that relevant stakeholders are involved in the evaluation process. In particular they should ensure community participation and encourage the use of the evaluation as an educational process for building the capacity of community members and the staff of the mine action organisations;
- c) shall ensure that evaluators (including external consultants) are properly briefed and supported and behave in a professional and impartial way, in accordance with IMAS and/or national standards for evaluation;
- d) should ensure that results of the evaluation are applied. Evaluation should be linked back to the needs assessment and project planning stages to ensure appropriate follow-up action is taken; and
- e) should ensure that results of the evaluation are disseminated: that reports are transparent and made available (with the agreement of the stakeholders, where necessary); and that general lessons learned from the evaluations are shared through the NMAA or other mine action coordination mechanisms.

15.4. Donors

Donor organizations where relevant, should ensure that projects have an evaluation component and the necessary resources to undertake them. They should also evaluate projects they have funded and should take into account evaluation findings and recommendations for future funding of mine action programmes.

15.5. Evaluation team

While the responsibility of the evaluation team may vary depending on the type and objectives of the mine action evaluation, as general guidelines, the following outlines major tasks that an evaluation team may undertake during evaluations.

- a) Review and consolidate information from all reviews, evaluations and studies of a similar nature that have been undertaken in the past.⁵
- b) Identify and consult with a wide range of stakeholders, including government, donors, mine action operators and civil society involved in peace building and development.
- c) Analyse the government commitments made in the field of mine action (ratification of treaties, status of implementation) and any changes that should occur if the country increases its national commitments.
- d) Collect information from direct male and female beneficiaries.
- e) Analyse the current structure of the programme or project to be evaluated, at the policy and operational levels, including commercial and humanitarian operators, governance and coordination mechanisms and quality management.

⁵ The GICHD maintains a database containing hundreds of reports from mine action studies and evaluations, available at: www.gichd.org/links-information-database/research-and-evaluation-reports/

- f) Review the nature and extent of technical and managerial capacity.
- g) Discuss donor priorities and objectives.
- h) Review the past and current deployment of resources for the programme or project, including prioritisation, accountability and transparency.
- i) Review the current development context and make an analysis of the future.
- j) Make recommendations for the future, taking into account the lessons learnt and the current trends in resource availability.
- k) Integrate stakeholder comments into the evaluation.
- l) Present and disseminate final evaluation report.

Annex A (Normative) References

The following normative documents contain provisions, which, through reference in this text, constitute provisions of this part of the standard. For dated references, subsequent amendments to, or revisions of, any of these publications do not apply. However, parties to agreements based on this part of the standard are encouraged to investigate the possibility of applying the most recent editions of the normative documents indicated below. For undated references, the latest edition of the normative document referred to applies. Members of ISO and IEC maintain registers of currently valid ISO or EN:

- a) IMAS 04.10 Glossary of mine action terms, definitions and abbreviations;
- b) Development Assistance Committee (DAC), Principles for Evaluation of Development Assistance, Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), 1991;
- c) Development Assistance Committee (DAC), Guidance for Evaluating Humanitarian Assistance in Complex Emergencies, Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), 1999;
- d) Development Assistance Committee (DAC), Glossary of Key Terms in Evaluation and Results Based Management, Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), 2002;
- e) United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG), standards for evaluation in the UN system; and
- f) United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG), norms for evaluation in the UN system.

The latest version/edition of these references should be used. GICHD hold copies of all references used in this standard. A register of the latest version/edition of the IMAS standards, guides and references is maintained by GICHD, and can be read on the IMAS website (<http://www.mineactionstandards.org/>). NMAA, employers and other interested bodies and organisations should obtain copies before commencing mine action programmes.

Key websites:

Mine Action Research and Evaluations Reports Database (www.gichd.org/links-information-database/research-and-evaluation-reports/).

Mine Action Evaluations and Studies Calendar (www.gichd.org/calendars/evaluations-and-studies-calendar/).

