



**PROPOSAL AND JUSTIFICATION
FOR
AMMENDING AN EXISTING INTERNATIONAL MINE ACTION STANDARD,
DEVELOPING A NEW STANDARD,
OR
A NEW TECHNICAL NOTE FOR MINE ACTION**

This form is intended to provide the start point in a process that identifies both shortcomings and improvements needed in International Mine Action Standards (IMAS) and their accompanying Technical Notes on Mine Action (TNMA).

After it has been properly completed and submitted, the proposal will be reviewed by the Chairman and the Secretary of the IMAS Review Board who will then include their comments, if any, and circulate it to the Review Board. If there is support for the proposal from at least 25% of the Review Board's members the process will continue.

Note 1: When the Review Board supports the subject matter, the proposal for a new IMAS will be submitted to the IMAS Steering Group for approval.

Note 2: In the event of amendments to an existing IMAS, this form will only be used when the amendments are substantial (e.g. NMAA and Mine Action Organizations may need to amend their National Standards and/or SOPs).

Note 3: When the Review Board cannot agree on a proposal, the issue will be put to the IMAS Steering Group for a final decision.

OPTIMA Defence & Security (ODS) wish to propose that the following is considered within the framework of International Mine Action Standards:

Theme or subject matter? This is an application to amend IMAS in relation to technical information and SOP writing guidance in the subject area of remnant or legacy IEDs, IED threat assessment and their detection within areas under consideration for Mine Action (MA).

Rationale as to why there is a need?

In line with the existing proposal by MAG and AVTS to review competency standards for EOD Level 4 operators with regards to modern MA projects, ODS believes that there is insufficient guidance or technical information available to project managers or NMAA in the field of IEDs. IED disposal is briefly mentioned in these same documents but represent a significant hazard to untrained personnel at all levels of qualification. Given that IEDs are now part of all contemporary operating environments and regularly placed either alongside or in place of conventional mines, the danger faced by MA operators cannot be ignored. The terms 'legacy' and 'remnant' are used to describe IEDs that are left in post-conflict areas but neither of these terms refers to the fact that the IEDs are still active and remain dangerous. Many are in fact more hazardous due to the fact that they have been abandoned.

State the current shortcoming and/or need for improvement of existing IMAS/TNMA that this new topic will seek to address? (max 200 words)

1. There is no TNMA or IMAS dedicated to IEDs. Longer delay in addressing this situation allows unqualified persons to write SOPs and develop dangerous procedures. An organization such as ODS; current consultants to the UK MOD and the European Defence Agency on the subject, would be a suitably current and reliable source of information when developing safe SOPs or other technical documents.
2. IMAS Level 4 EOD competencies regarding IED detection, confirmation and disposal give no clear guidance on the actions to be carried out in finding a potential IED or parts thereof.
3. Clarification of the use of terms such as 'legacy' and 'remnant' in relation to IEDs is required. They are likely to be referred to in future documents and their meaning and the way in which they are used could have serious consequences.
4. GICHD and IMAS may need to make reference to specialized SMEs in order to catch up with the emerging threats and provide the MA community with the initial information they require.

Explain the negative impact on field operations that this shortcoming will or has caused and/ or the improvement that is expected? (max 200 words)

1. The lack of clearly defined qualifications required, including the proof of qualification, has resulted in MA organisations appointing what amount to be less than competent persons as their 'IED Officer' i.e. individuals who have neither the qualifications or experience to provide accurate advice.
2. The subject of IED Destroy and Detect is as diverse and complicated as MA itself and cannot be covered by a simple statement. Reliance on persons with previous (normally military) experience in IED detection and destruction is not backed by formally stated certifications required or proof of up to date competency in each type of IED destroy or detect discipline. The current blanket coverage of the topic by existing IMAS has allowed inexperienced and out of date operators to hold supervisory positions at potentially great risk to other members of the MA teams in their organisations.
3. There have already been casualties among EOD operators in some countries because they believed they had sufficient qualification to deal with the threat. Future casualties among EOD operators are inevitable if a formalized and technically accurate set of regularly reviewed and updated guidelines and standards are not put in place that reflect modern IED technological advances.

Explain the negative impact on the mine affected community that this shortcoming will or has caused and/ or the improvement that is expected? (max 200 words)

1. Land release cannot reasonably be achieved if all other ERW has been cleared from an area but legacy or remnant IEDs remain in place due to the lack of proven competent operators that can clear them at the same time as other hazards.
2. Some MA EOD operators have already become casualties to legacy IEDs in some affected countries in spite of their assumed competence. Untrained communities will therefore be at much greater risk if all ERW, less any IEDs are cleared and the area handed back.
3. The generally large size of most IED main charges result in more catastrophic injuries than AP mines and the impact on a local workforce would be greater due to persons suffering multiple amputations than that already felt by persons missing single hands or feet.

Are there any existing publications already dealing with this topic? (max 100 words)

1. As stated in IMAS 9.30 4.2 d); Level 4 operators are 'specialist EOD operators who have been trained and are qualified to destroy the remaining EOD hazards with specialized EOD techniques. Such specialist skills may include the render safe of liquid propellant systems, disposal of Depleted Uranium and the clearance of conventional munitions with improvised firing systems.' This does not cover the threat from improvised explosives, in particular their DETECTION, possible complex firing mechanisms or the requirement for Electronic Countermeasures (ECM) in some threat environments to name but a few specifically IED related hazards.

State why this issue is best addressed through IMAS/TNMA and may not be adequately covered by support and/or endorsement of an existing or under draft publication? (max 200 words)

1. The extremely general nature of existing IMAS relating to EOD level 4 competence and the avoidance of the IED threat in all other areas of documentation has left the whole subject area uncovered.
2. The currency and competency required for safe operations and the types of devices likely to be found is a subject that has no definitions within the IMAS.
3. The very modern and contemporary nature of IED warfare and the unavoidable inclusion of IEDs in any future MA projects make a comprehensive policy and technical support system a new and vital requirement if further casualties in local populations and EOD operators are to be prevented.
4. In order to give MA companies enough guidance to start writing new SOPs to cover any possible IED threats in a new area a full review of the level of detail and technical content of IMAS and supporting TNMA will prevent MA organizations from omitting important detail or simply relying on old and dangerous out of date information.

ANNEX A

Summary and recommendations resulting of above proposal: *(To be prepared by the Secretary or the Chair of the IMAS Review Board)*

Date received: 09 March/ 2012

Action: The proposal was not supported by some members of the IMAS Review Board. The issue was discussed in the following IMAS Review Board meeting but no agreement was made.