



**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.

The **Mines Advisory Group (MAG) and Allen Vanguard Threat Solutions** 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 respect of the EOD Level 4 competency qualification.

Rationale as to why there is a need?

EOD competency levels 1, 2 and 3 are supported by detailed documentation stating the precise scope of each competency on which to base an award or to be able to categorise or match an individual's EOD training and experience to the relevant competency level. However, it is currently impossible to do this for the Level 4 qualification because the required information is not specified in sufficient detail as in the case of the other competency levels. Recent UN RFP's have clearly stated that the project leader, or in other cases, that at least one technical member of staff must be EOD level 4 qualified. How can MA companies adequately prove that programme staff are level 4 qualified when there is no documented standard to be able to reference qualifications and experience (competency) against? It is also the case that disparity exists between different MA company's and individual's and their perception and use of the EOD level 4 qualification because of the lack of detail specified within the IMAS and elsewhere.

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. Within Mine Action (MA) there is a necessity to employ personnel of an EOD level 4 competency standard as the challenges and range of EOD tasks become ever more complex, both in terms of their management and in the safe application of advanced EOD techniques.
2. The mandated CEN Workshop Agreement (CWA) 15464:2005, for EOD Competency Standards in MA, comprehensively defines three competency levels, but only offers a brief description of specialised EOD tasks identified as belonging within an EOD level 4 set of competencies.
3. The IMAS describes the EOD level 4 role and provides TNMA for a number of tasks which require this qualification. The description of the scope and definition of EOD level 4 skills however, is not defined, and does not provide sufficient information on which to facilitate the award the qualification or design of training to meet the stated requirements.
4. By inserting a new IMAS (possibly an amendment to IMAS 9.30) solely dealing with the EOD level 4 qualification, MA organisations and individuals would be provided with necessary 'baseline' guidance in assessing the requirement for award of the qualification set against modern MA programme needs and the tasks performed, and in establishing an industry benchmark, by which for example, individual qualifications can be assessed and the relevant training developed.

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. By not concisely stating the requirement in authoritative documentation and not treating the EOD level 4 qualification in the same way as for competency levels 1 - 3, the MA community has inadvertently created a 'manoeuvre' area, within which organisations have the flexibility to interpret CWA and IMAS requirements independent from any formal guidelines. This places a burden on formal audit processes because of the lack of an agreed standard (and allied documentation) and could engender 'localized' training regimes and SOP's for a specific programme dependent on individual knowledge and interpretation of the CWA/IMAS.
2. Formal description of Knowledge Skills and Attitudes (KSA) for the EOD level 4 competency, derived through similar processes employed in publishing the CWA, is probably not feasible at this time, nor necessary, when taking into account the capacity to mount competent EOD level 4 operations by MA organisations and National Mine Action Authorities (NMAA).
3. Through insertion of expanded EOD level 4 guidelines into IMAS, MA organisations will be able to match qualifications with a formally agreed competency description and classify MA qualifications (retrospectively where necessary) and better assess award of the EOD level 4 qualification. Quality systems will be more robust as audit can be referenced to an accepted international standard and internal training programmes designed and underpinned by a validated qualification scope and description.

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

1. Within IMAS, holders of the level 4 competency are described in IMAS 9.30 4.2 d) as '*specialist EOD operators who have been trained and are qualified to destroy the remaining EOD hazards with specialist EOD techniques*'. In the same paragraph specialist skills are listed as: *Liquid Propellant Systems, Disposal of Depleted Uranium* and clearance of *Conventional Munitions with Improvised Firing Systems*. TNMA describing munitions and weapons systems which are considered within the EOD level 4 operator's technical capacity and experience are also provided within IMAS.

Note: IMAS mirrors the CWA 15464:2005 description of the qualification.

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 EOD level 4 competency provides a 'catch-all' for EOD tasks deemed to require specialist EOD KSA. IMAS TNMA provides further information for MA organisations and practitioners in the performance of certain specialist EOD tasks. The scope of tasks that could be considered as falling within the remit of an EOD level 4 competency requires review (see attached scoping document), which should include the full range of modern explosive ordnance hazards likely to be encountered during MA programmes or during conduct of rapid response operations.

2. EOD Level 4 qualified personnel are as fundamental to the success of modern demining operations as those qualified at levels 1 – 3 and are an important and embedded cadre within humanitarian demining programmes. Description of a generic EOD level 4 competency standard is best captured in the foremost and most globally recognised and accessible MA documentation source, IMAS. Insertion of a new standard or amendment of an existing standard will provide a comprehensive description of the scope of the qualification, its applicability and a baseline from which to assess the requirement for MA programmes and underpin training and subsequent award of the qualification.

3. In tandem, TNMA allied to the EOD level 4 competency, can be developed to compliment the IMAS amendment and satisfy requirements for additional technical data.

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: 12 Jan 2012

Action: The proposal is supported by the IMAS Review Board and its currently being drafted.