

MINUTES IMAS STEERING GROUP JULY 2021

Date of meeting:	15 July 2021
Start time (duration):	09:00 New York (90 minutes)
Location:	Held remotely on Zoom
Meeting Secretary:	Mr. Sasha Logie, GICHD

Record of Attendance

Members:

UNMAS / Chair	Ms. Ilene Cohn, Acting Director
GICHD	Ambassador Stefano Toscano, Director
LMAC	Brigadier General Jihad Bechelany, Director
MASG	Mr. Wolfgang Bindseil, Chair of the MASG and Head of Division, Business and Human Rights, German Foreign Office
UNDP	Mr. Steinar Essen, Specialist, Development and Mine Action
UNICEF	Ms. Brigid Kennedy Pfister, Senior Child Protection Adviser
UNOPS	Mr. Amir Omeragic, Director, Peace and Security Cluster

Guest:

Drafting Committee Co-Chair	Mr. Richard Boulter, Senior Programme Manager – UNMAS, South Sudan
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1. Welcome and introduction of new Steering Group members.

The Chair opened the meeting and noted that it was the first assemblage of the newly configured Steering Group (SG), with the addition of two new rotating members representing mine action donors and national mine action programmes.

The following new participants were welcomed:

- Mr. Wolfgang Bindseil, rotating new SG member representative for donors to mine action.
- Brigadier General Jihad Bechelany, rotating new SG member representative for directors of mine action programmes.
- Mr. Amir Omeragic, new SG member representative for UNOPS.
- Ms. Brigid Kennedy Pfister, substitute for Ms. Meritxell Relano.
- Mr. Sasha Logie, new IMAS SG Secretary.

2. Adoption of the Agenda.

The agenda was adopted without any changes.

3. Consideration/adoption of recommended changes to IMAS 01.10 ‘Guidance for the application of IMAS’ (2nd Edition, Amendment 10, 2020).

The SG considered adopting the second phase of changes to IMAS 01.10. pertaining to sections 12.4, 12.5, sections B3 and B4 of Annex B, and Appendixes 2 and 3 only. The first amendment phase, which related to the IMAS SG, was adopted by the SG in November 2020, and was endorsed by the Inter-Agency Coordination Group on Mine Action (IACG-MA) on 6 December 2020.

The rationale for the second amendment phase was two-fold. First, to address the recommendations pursuant to the EY IMAS governance evaluation relevant to the Review Board (RB) and Technical Working Group (TWG). Second, to align the RB and TWG sections to SG sections finalized in the first phase.

Mr. Richard Boulter, co-chair of the drafting committee (DC), the group of member representatives established by the SG to draft amended text to the IMAS, explained how the DC had interpreted and adopted the recommendations of the EY report.

During the discussion that followed, it was noted that RB membership is based on qualified organisations with pre-existing knowledge submitting expressions of interest to the RB Chair. The SG decided that section ref. B.3.3.3 “Member Selection Process” should include text where potential organisations are notified of the RB membership processes to encourage expressions of interest. The SG instructed the DC to amend the text accordingly.

The SG adopted by consensus IMAS 01.10 2nd Edition, Amendment 10, subject to the DC amending section B.3.3.3 as outlined above.

4. Consideration/adoption of IMAS 13.10 – ‘Victim Assistance in Mine Action’ (1st Edition, 2021).

The SG considered adopting IMAS 13.10 “Victim Assistance in Mine Action” which was approved by the RB on 24 May 2021.

A draft version of the standard was uploaded to the IMAS website in April 2020. The Harvard Law School Project on Disability (HPOD) made various comments on the document, noting inconsistencies between the draft standard and the Convention on Rights of Persons with Disabilities. The SG directed that the standard be removed from the website and asked the RB to re-work it in consideration of the HPOD feedback. This process was completed between January and May 2021, during which time further input from RB members was also incorporated into the document.

It was noted by SG members that an IMAS on victim assistance in mine action was a welcome development and was expected to clarify the scope of the sector’s response in the areas of advocacy, coordination and encourage linkages with wider efforts to ensure respect for the rights of persons with disabilities.

It was also noted that further precision and consistency in the definition and use of terms, particularly those that are defined in legal instruments outside of the mine action sector, would improve the guidance to mine action organisations.

UNICEF confirmed that the IMAS is in line with its approach to victim assistance. UNICEF, UNDP and GICHD supported the adoption of the IMAS in its current version.

The SG concluded by adopting in principle and by consensus IMAS 13.10 1st Edition. The SG asked the RB to review section 3: “Terms, Definitions and Abbreviations”, and to submit a revised text to the IMAS SG, ensuring that appropriate expertise on terms and definitions, and coherence with existing terminology, be included in this revision. SG members with specific concerns were requested to share these with the RB.

5. Consideration/approval of IMAS Review Board Workplan 2021/2022

The RB workplan, setting out the activities that will be conducted by the RB over a 12-month period, must be approved by the SG. The focus of the 2021/2022 workplan is on the review and update of existing outdated IMAS content, prioritising IMAS that are most commonly accessed on the IMAS website. The RB approved a draft new RB workplan on 24 May 2021 and submitted it to the SG for consideration and approval. The SG approved the IMAS Review Board workplan 2021/2022.

6. National or local mine action authorities.

A couple of Member States have raised concerns about usage of the terms “national mine action authority” and “national mine action centre” when referring to mine action authorities and centres that are not representing a recognised sovereign state structure. These Member States’ concerns raise issues about eligibility of membership to IMAS governance bodies, as well as the accuracy of terminology used within IMAS. It was noted that this issue is of a political nature and that the IMAS SG is the appropriate body to address it, within the IMAS governance structure.

There was some initial discussion and exchange of ideas around revising or clarifying terminology within IMAS to address the concerns. It was concluded that more time would be required to address the topic fully and to reach a conclusion, and that the agenda item should be deferred to either the next regular SG meeting in early 2022 or a dedicated meeting to address the issue at an earlier date.

7. Any other business.

No additional items of business were tabled.

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